

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
(Initial Study)
CITY OF SANTA CLARITA



Project Title and Master Case Number: Sierra Crossing
Master Case No. 08-033
Conditional Use Permit No. 08-005
Minor Use Permit No. 08-008
Oak Tree Permit No. 08-006
Initial Study No. 08-003

Lead Agency name & address: City of Santa Clarita
23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 302
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Contact Person and phone number: Ben Jarvis, Associate Planner
City of Santa Clarita
Community Development Department
(661) 255-4330

Project Location: The proposed project is located at 23300 Newhall Avenue (formerly known as San Fernando Road) in the City of Santa Clarita, in the County of Los Angeles. The project site is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Newhall Avenue and Sierra Highway, west of the Antelope Valley (SR-14) Freeway.

Applicant's name and address: SFXS Partners, LLC
24933 San Fernando Road
Santa Clarita, CA 91321

Property Owner and address: SFXS Partners, LLC
24933 San Fernando Road
Santa Clarita, CA 91321

General Plan Designation: Community Commercial

Zoning Designation(s): Community Commercial Planned Development Overlay (CC(PD)).

Project Description and Setting:

Regional Setting

The project site is located at a southern gateway entry to Santa Clarita, adjacent to State Route 14 (Antelope Valley Freeway). The area currently has limited, freeway-oriented commercial uses and is located in the City's Newhall Community. Newhall was founded in 1876 and was the first location of permanent settlement in the Santa Clarita Valley. The town grew in conjunction with the railroad and oil industries and was later the setting for motion picture and filming ranches in the early 1900s. As a community, Newhall has retained its identity as an old western town. This identity is reflected in local architecture as well as cultural resources such as the Western Walk of Stars and the William S. Hart Regional Park. As the oldest community in the Santa Clarita Valley, Newhall is home to numerous historic resources. Historic areas are primarily located in the downtown area along Main Street (a portion of the former San Fernando Road), at Heritage Junction located within William S. Hart Park, and in nearby canyons and neighborhoods.

Recently, there have been significant changes in Newhall as part of a major community redevelopment effort. As part of the Downtown Newhall Specific Plan and the City's Beautification Master Plan, San Fernando Road was renamed to better reflect the road's relationship to the local area. The roadway portion through downtown Newhall was renamed "Main Street" and now serves as the backbone for downtown redevelopment. The segment north of 11th Street northward to the intersection of Magic Mountain Parkway is now known as "Railroad Avenue." The name change reflects the proximity of the roadway to the Metrolink train tracks and also serves as a logical extension of the existing Railroad Avenue in downtown Newhall. The remaining portion of San Fernando Road, the segment that runs between the Antelope Valley Freeway and 5th Street, was renamed "Newhall Avenue." This provides greater cohesiveness within Newhall itself and also provides regional visibility for travelers on the Antelope Valley Freeway. Historically, San Fernando Road was the primary route between the San Joaquin Valley and the Los Angeles Basin. In the early and mid-twentieth century, the intersection of today's Newhall Avenue and Sierra Highway served as a northern gateway to Southern California. The intersection was the literal junction where travelers either headed north toward Sacramento and San Francisco, or northeast to Nevada, the Rocky Mountains, and the east coast. Modern freeways have routed traffic away from the area and the Newhall Avenue/Sierra Highway intersection. While the intersection remains one of the busiest within the Santa Clarita Valley, it no longer functions as the northern gateway to Southern California.

Newhall development consists of a mix of uses, including large lot single-family homes, high-density apartment communities, industrial uses in Railroad Canyon, and traditional Main Street commercial development in downtown. The area immediately surrounding the subject property consists of freeway commercial uses, a mobile home park, a movie production storage lot, a cemetery, vacant land, and the Antelope Valley Freeway.

Project Setting

The 10.28-acre project site is located within the City of Santa Clarita and comprises the following five parcels: Assessor Parcel Nos. 2827-005-014, 015, 027, 028, and, 034. Originally, the property reflected the rolling topography of the area; however, the site is now generally flat and has been substantially graded and disturbed. The property is routinely mowed and grubbed for weed control and fire prevention. The property is not located on a hillside. The eastern property boundary is the former centerline of US 6, the original highway that connected Los Angeles to Provincetown on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. The natural drainage through the property was channelized when the highway was constructed in the early Twentieth Century. More extensive grading occurred when Sierra Highway was constructed in the early 1900s and then widened in the 1930s. Sierra Highway comprises the western boundary of the property. The property is bounded to the north by Newhall Avenue (formerly San Fernando Road), and to the south by other commercial property that is currently used as a vehicle storage yard. A residential structure was built on the site in the 1940s but was demolished sometime before 1992. Only remnants of concrete foundations and steps remain. The foundations have no historic or cultural value.

Newhall Creek runs in a northwesterly direction along the property's eastern edge. The creek was directed into a partially-manufactured gully during highway construction in the early 1900s and has been altered significantly from its original course and situation on the property. Runoff from Eternal Valley Cemetery and Sierra Highway enters the gully at the south end of the site and joins the Elsmere Canyon drainage as it emerges from a concrete culvert under the former US 6 right-of-way. Water then flows northward and crosses under Newhall Avenue in a box culvert. When the creek

emerges on the other side of the intersection of Newhall Avenue and Sierra Highway, it converges with the Whitney Canyon drainage and continues flowing northwesterly toward the South Fork of the Santa Clara River. The creek channel has a soft-bottom and lush vegetation. As part of the proposed project, 300' of the creek's northern end would be covered to create parking and retail space. On August 28, 2008, the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) sent the applicant a draft Streambed Alteration Agreement (#1600-2008-0080-R5 Revision 1) that reflects the proposed modification of this drainage. The United States Army Corps of Engineers also has jurisdiction over this drainage, as does the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Permits with those agencies are pending.

Project maps are found in Exhibits 1 and 2. Exhibits 3 through 18 show photos of the project site and the surrounding land uses.

Project Description

The Applicant is proposing the development of a five-building retail, office, and hotel development in the Community Commercial Planned Development Overlay Zone in the City of Santa Clarita. The proposed project consists of a total of approximately 99,000 square feet (98,900) of building area. The commercial space will be distributed between five buildings. Two buildings will be single story, two buildings will have two stories and will be constructed over a subterranean parking deck, and the last building will be a four story hotel. The project will have a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of .22. This falls below the limit of .375 FAR potentially allowed in the Community Commercial zone (167,924 square feet). The project consists of the following improvements:

- One (1) Four-story hotel that would not exceed 55' in height and contain 55,200 square-feet;
- Two office/retail buildings comprising 31,120 square-feet (approximate), that would be 48' feet tall, would share a common roof and would be built over an underground parking structure (one building would be 16,420 square-feet the other would be 14,700 square feet);
- One (1) 7,000 square-feet stand-alone restaurant pad; and
- One (1) 5,584 square-feet multi-tenant building with a drive-through lane.

Both the hotel and restaurant pad would be built at a later time; only the multi-tenant building and the two office/commercial buildings would be constructed in the near term. The restaurant pad and hotel would require a Development Review Permit but would not require a public hearing before the Planning Commission provided that a development application is received within applicable timelines.

The project will require the following discretionary actions of the City of Santa Clarita:

- Conditional Use Permit for development in the Planned Development Overlay and also for buildings exceeding 35' in height;
- Minor Use Permit for a drive-through lane and dirt-hauling to import 46,000 cubic yards of fill; and
- Oak Tree Permit to allow for the removal of eight (8) oak trees, permit for four (4) oak tree encroachments, and also to provide mitigation measures for the remaining 32 oak trees on-site, including five (5) heritage specimens (there are currently 40 oak trees on the project site, not counting an oak tree in the public right-of-way that will be removed by the city).

The proposed project requires 385 parking spaces. A total of 434 parking spaces are shown on the site plan, including 145 subterranean spaces located beneath the commercial/office buildings.

Project Site Access and Infrastructure

The project site will take access to public streets via two driveways on Sierra Highway and a single driveway on Newhall Avenue. The southern-most entrance on Sierra Highway would be signalized and would permit traffic to turn right or left into or out of the project. The other entrance on Sierra Highway, as well as the entrance on Newhall Avenue, would provide a "right in/right out" configuration. Each driveway is at least 28' wide and meets the City and Fire Department

standards. Surface parking will be located across the project site and a subterranean parking deck would be located off the main driveway that connects Sierra Highway and Newhall Avenue. There will be three stand-alone trash enclosures and a dedicated trash and loading area for the restaurant pad. There would be multiple outdoor break/eating areas, at least one per building. All of the buildings would be linked together by a cohesive, prominent, pedestrian path/walkway. The project is being developed in a manner that will allow for access to the vacant parcels east of the site, between the subject property and the Antelope Valley Freeway, should that land ever be developed.

Project Grading and Drainage

The project site slopes gently from the south to the north, is not located on a hillside, and has an average cross-slope of 6%. The project site ranges in elevation from 1,428' above sea level at the south end of the site near Sierra Highway to 1,374' where Newhall Creek flows into the culvert under Newhall Avenue. Approximately 80% of the project site will be graded (8.2 acres). The proposed project will require 7,000 cubic yards of cut and 53,000 cubic yards of fill. The difference in dirt totals will require the import of 46,000 cubic yards of fill. This amount of dirt hauling will require a Minor Use Permit.

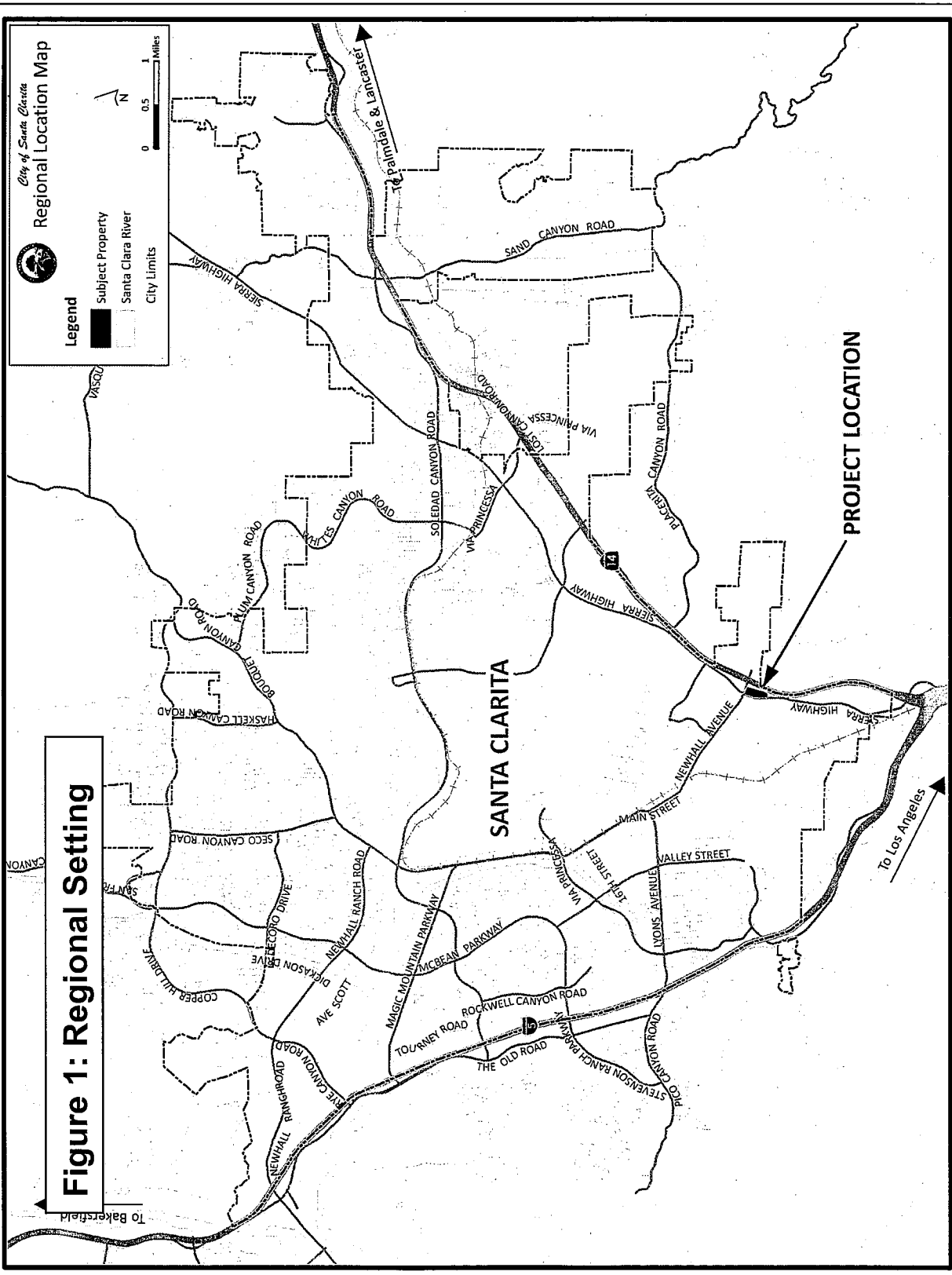
The existing site drainage includes a soft-bottom channel that conveys water from the Elsmere Canyon and Sierra Highway drainages. These waters converge at the south end of the project site to form Newhall Creek. Newhall Creek flows northwesterly across the property and under Newhall Avenue where it joins with drainage from Whitey Canyon. Portions of the project site are within a floodplain (see Section VIII). In order to protect the project from flood waters, the proposed project includes the construction of a flood wall and extension of an existing culvert. The flood wall would be constructed along the west side of the existing natural channel, along the edge of the California Department of Fish and Game's jurisdiction. In addition, the existing double reinforced concrete box culvert would be extended upstream into the property approximately 300 feet. The 8' x 22' box culvert extension would be constructed in Newhall Creek and would connect to the existing culvert under Newhall Avenue. The culvert extension will affect 300 linear feet of the Newhall Creek and approximately 0.11-acre of "waters of the United States." Avoidance and minimization measures for project impacts associated with the extension of the culvert are included in the biological assessment, wetland delineation report, and diversion plan as discussed in Section IV-Biological Resources. Mitigation would consist of on-site creation of riparian habitat (0.34-acres), restoration/enhancement of riparian habitat (2.79-acres), and preservation of riparian habitat (3.13-acres). The applicant would provide any additional mitigation required in order to satisfy California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) requirements, as part of obtaining a required Streambed Alteration Permit for the project.

Surrounding Land Uses:

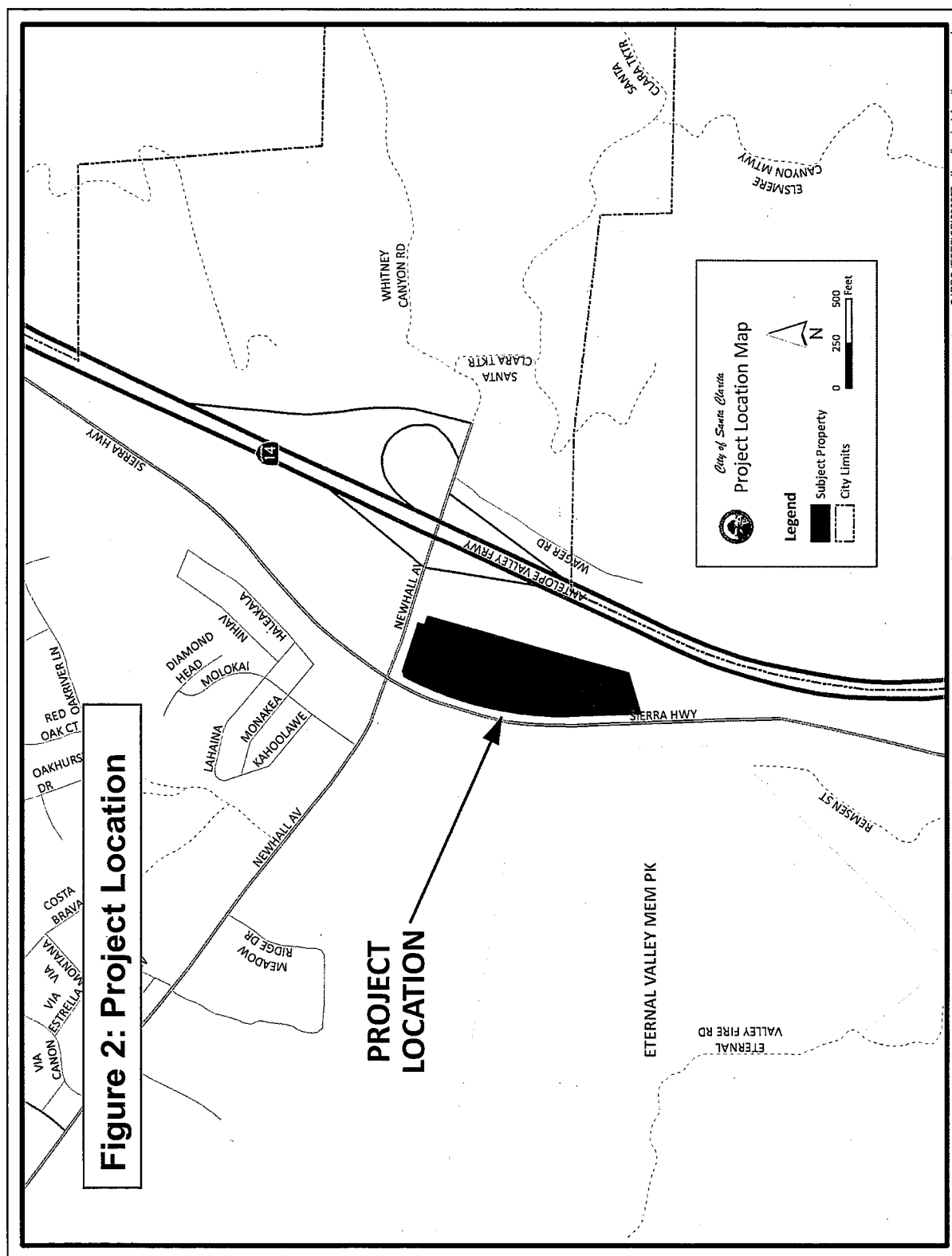
- North:** A fast-food restaurant (Carl's Jr.) is located directly north of the project site, across Newhall Avenue. This land is zoned CC(PD).
- South:** Industrial/Commercial use (an auto storage yard) and vacant land (CC(PD)).
- East:** Vacant land with the Antelope Valley Freeway and undeveloped wilderness area beyond (CC(PD)).
- West:** Various commercial uses including a cemetery, an auto repair business, gas station, and a vehicle storage lot. All of these uses are in the CC(PD) zone except for the cemetery which is located in the Open Space (OS) zone.

Other public agencies whose approval is required:

Los Angeles County Fire Department
California Department of Fish & Game
Army Corps of Engineers
Regional Water Quality Control Board



C:\PROJECTS\CD0080227\m1\mxd\regional_location_map.mxd



Master Case 08-033

Sierra Crossing Retail Center (Aerial)

This is a proprietary dataset provided courtesy of the Los Angeles Region Imagery Consortium (LAR-IC) and InfoTech Enterprises America, Inc. 2006 Map reproduced with permission granted by Thomas Bros. Maps (Copyright 2006). Parcel data: Copyright June 2008, County of Los Angeles.

Figure 3: Aerial Photo

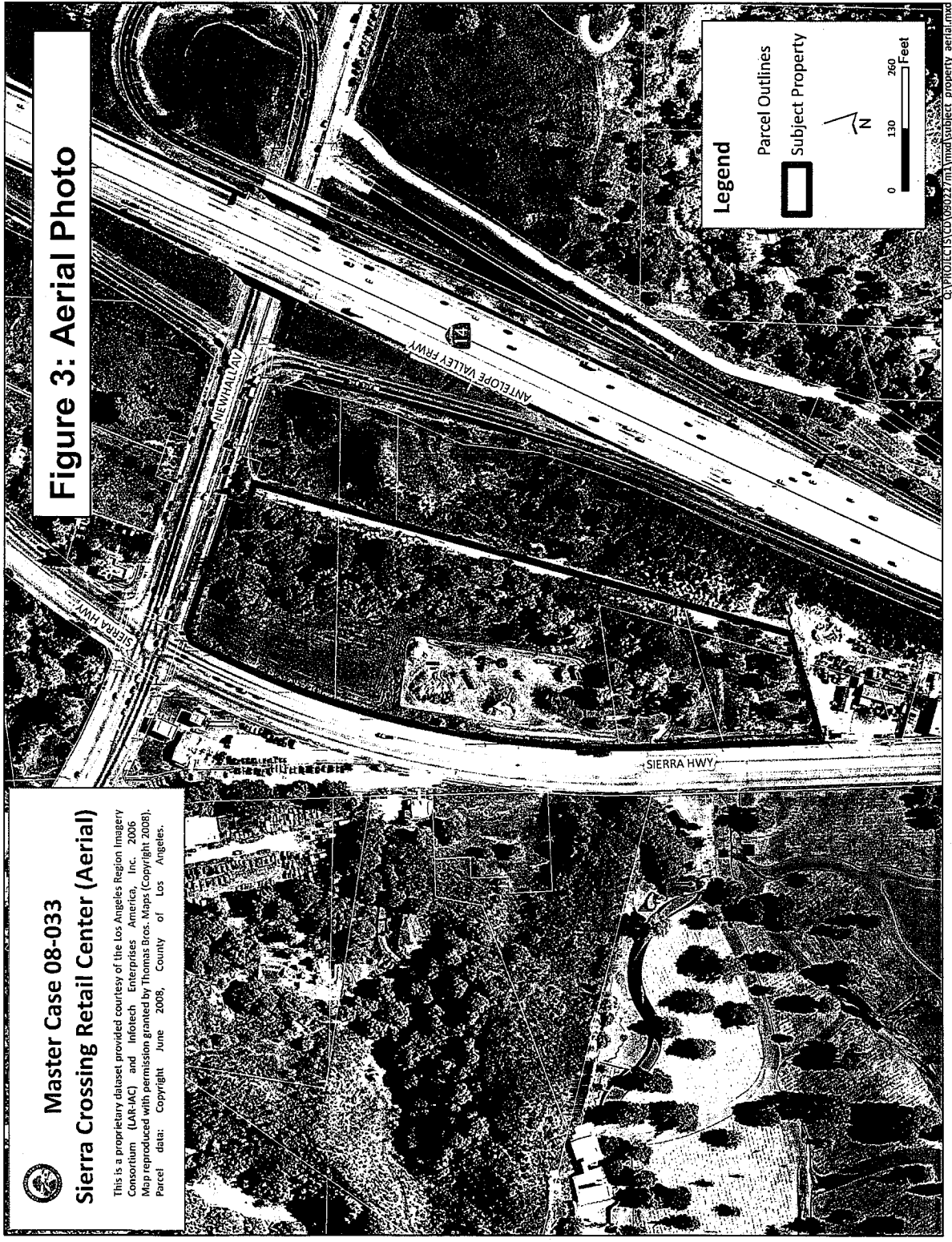


Figure 4: Site Plan

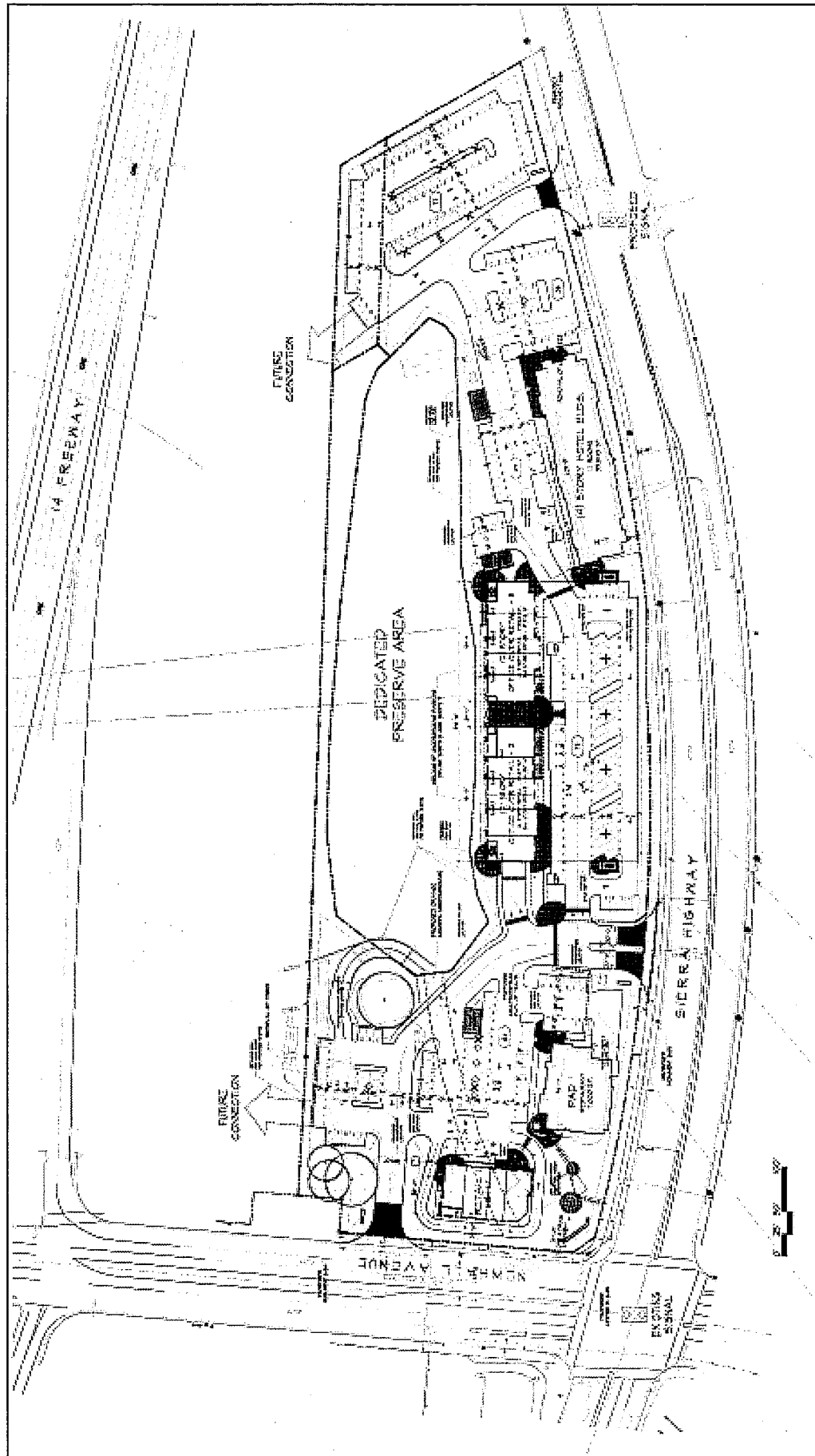
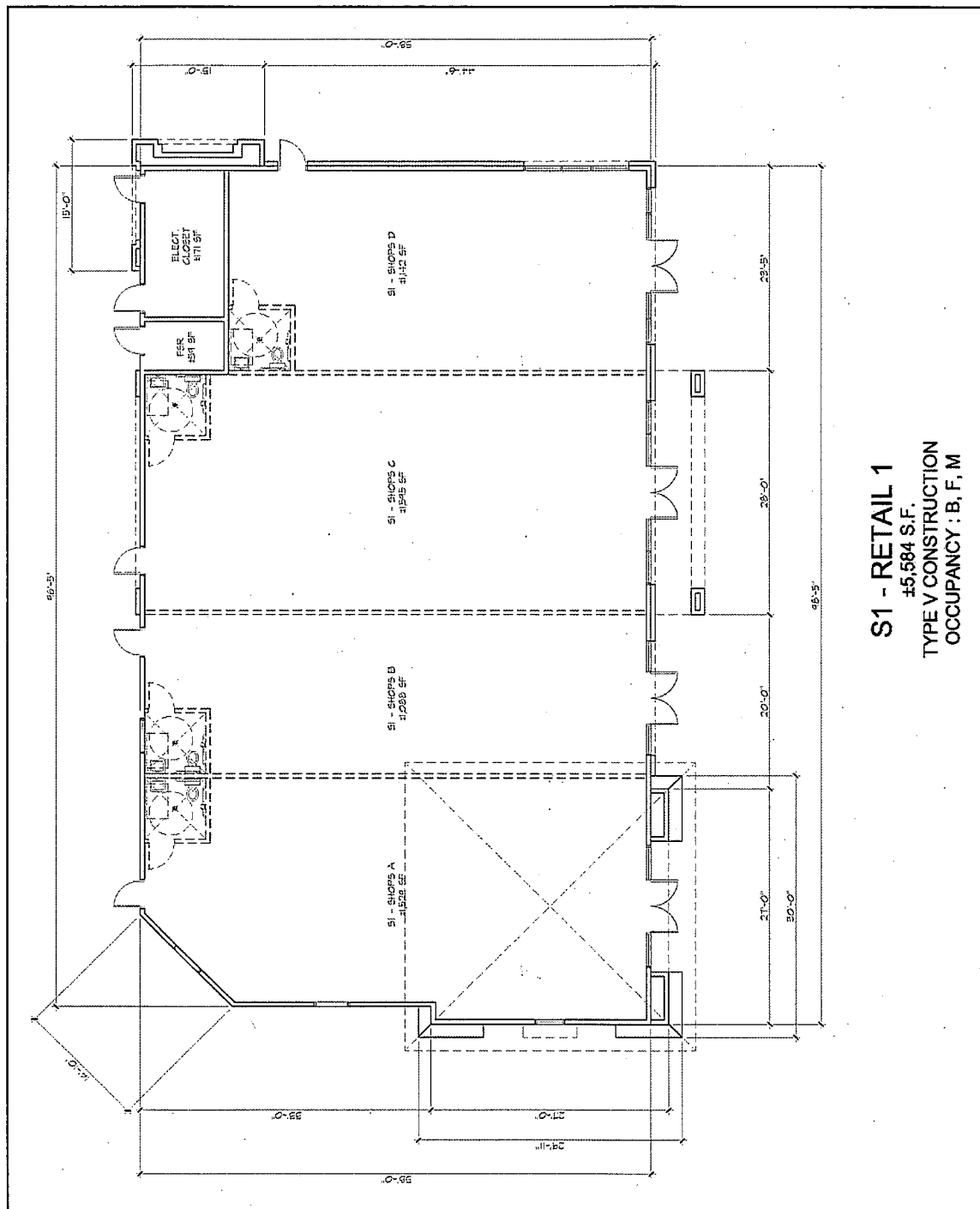


Figure 5: Retail 1 Building Plan



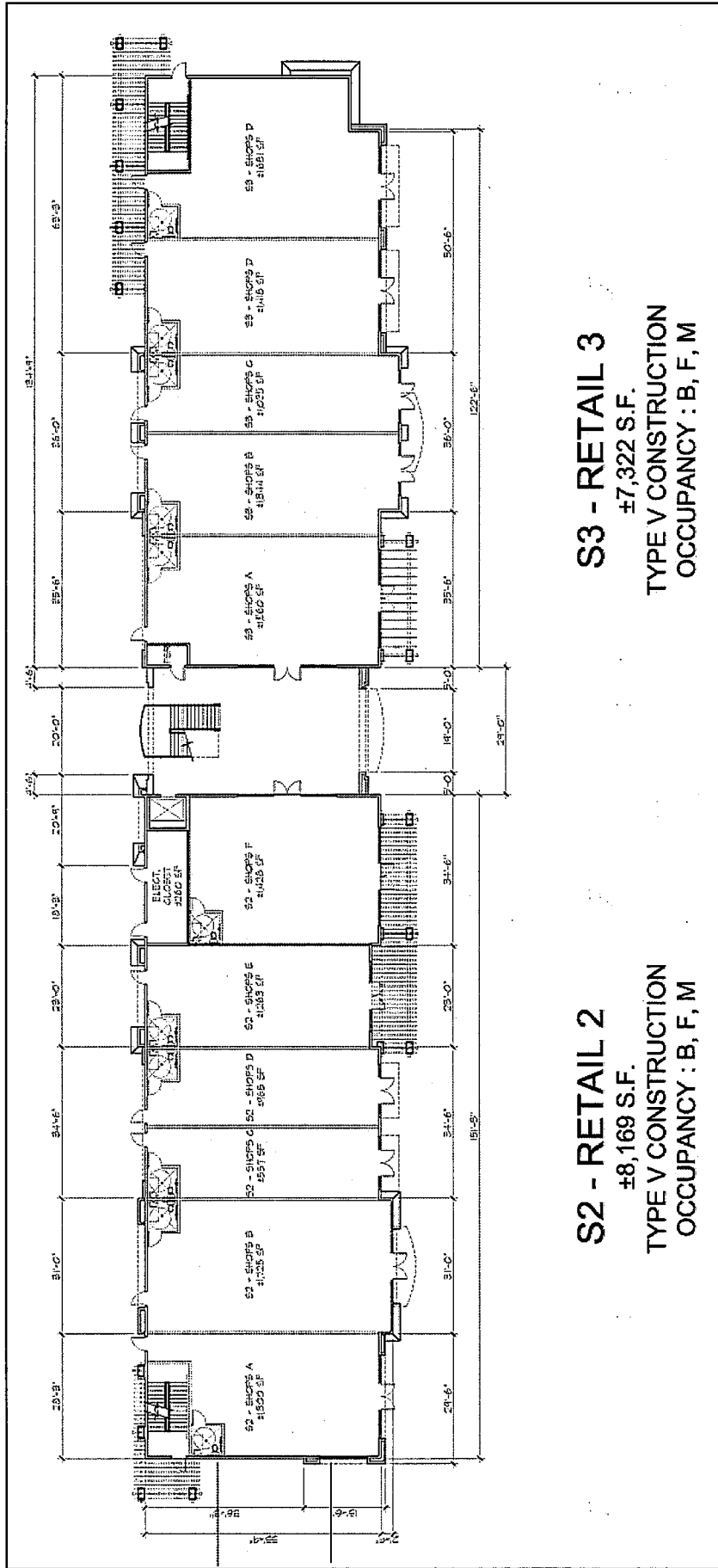


Figure 6: Retail 2 and Retail 3 Building Plans

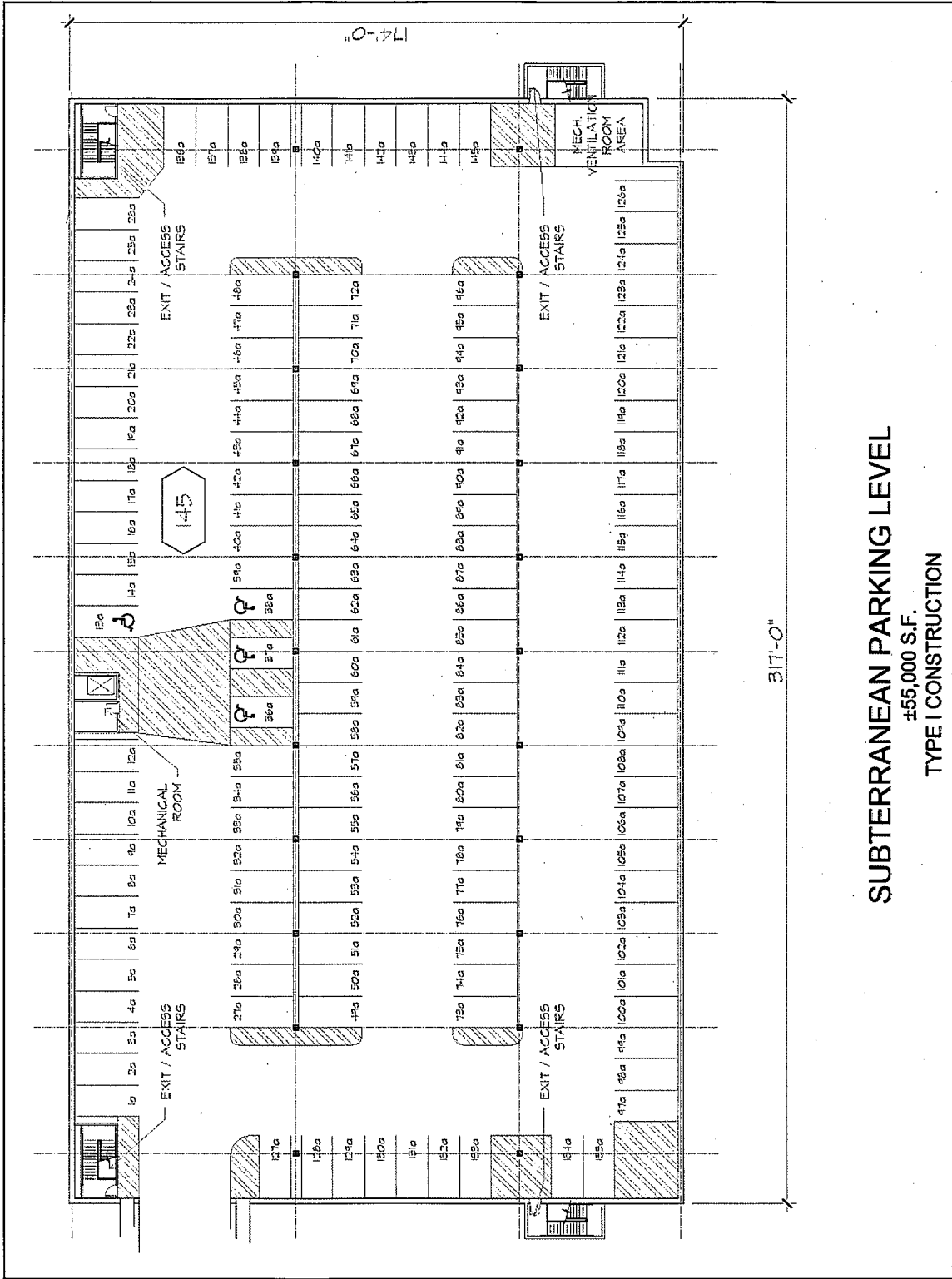


Figure 7: Subterranean Parking Level Plans

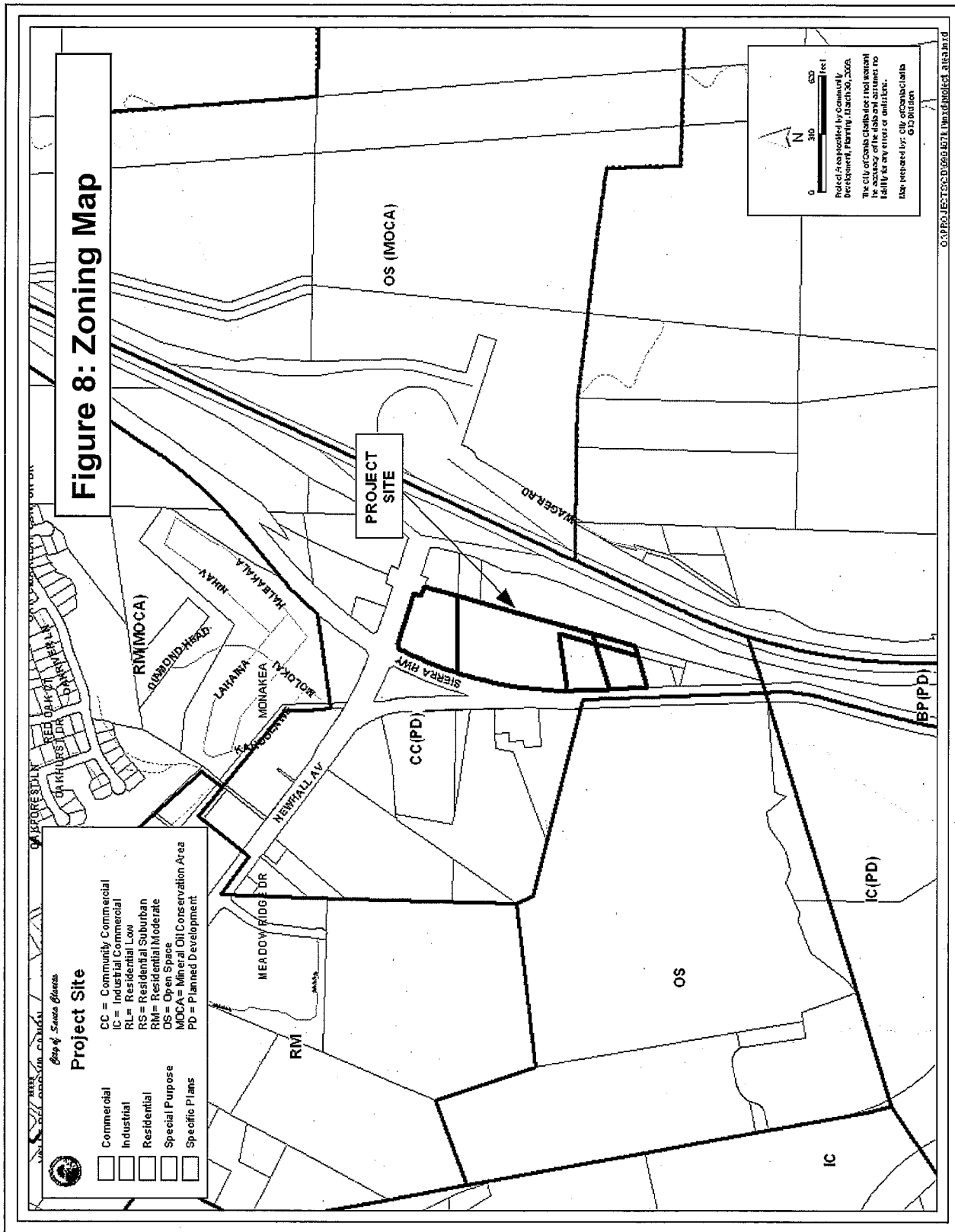
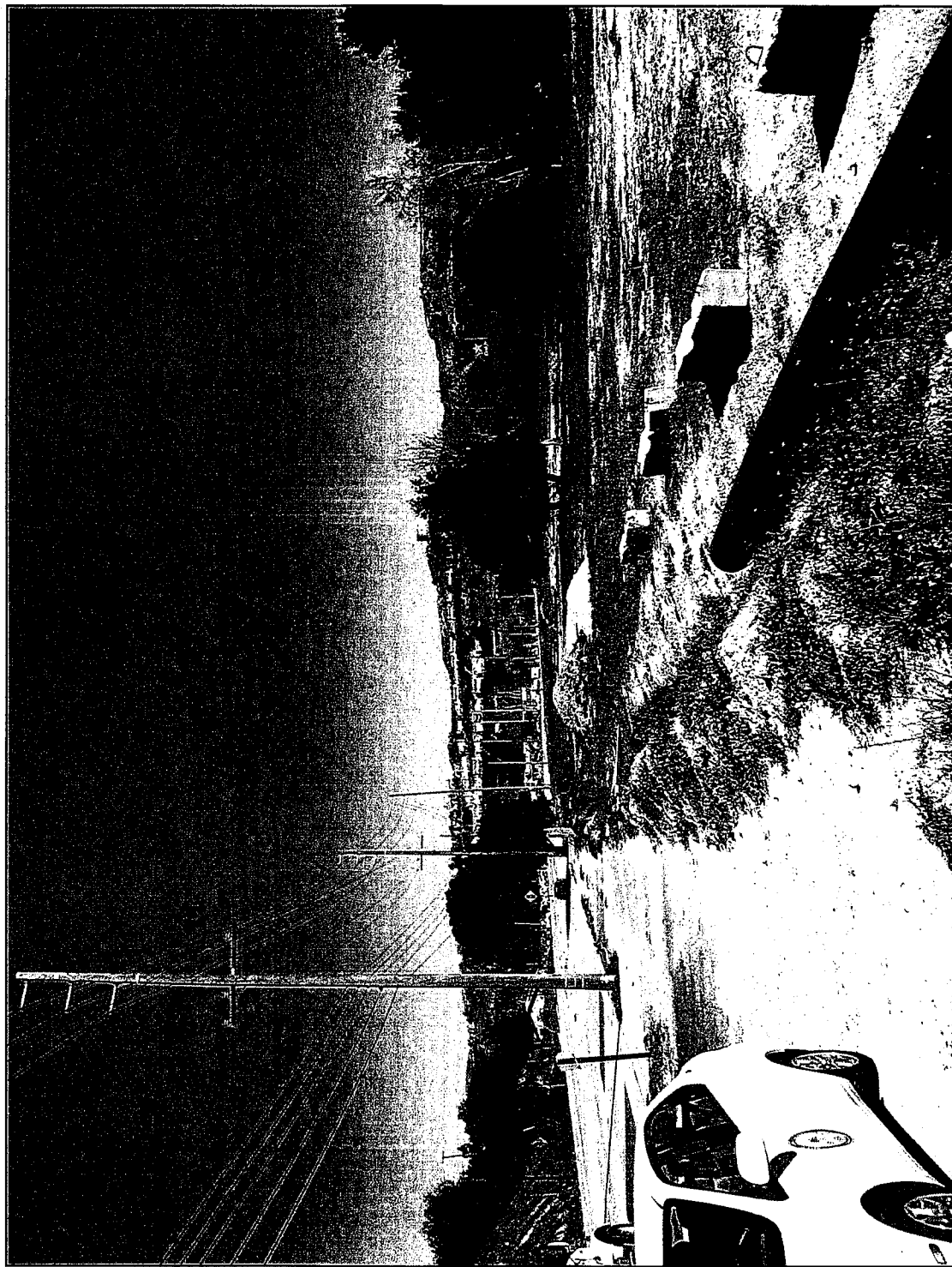


Figure 9: Northward perspective looking toward Newhall Avenue.



**Figure 10: Northward perspective of the project site looking toward
Newhall Avenue along Sierra Highway.**



**Figure 11: Southward perspective looking toward
Sierra Highway/Eternal Valley Cemetery.**

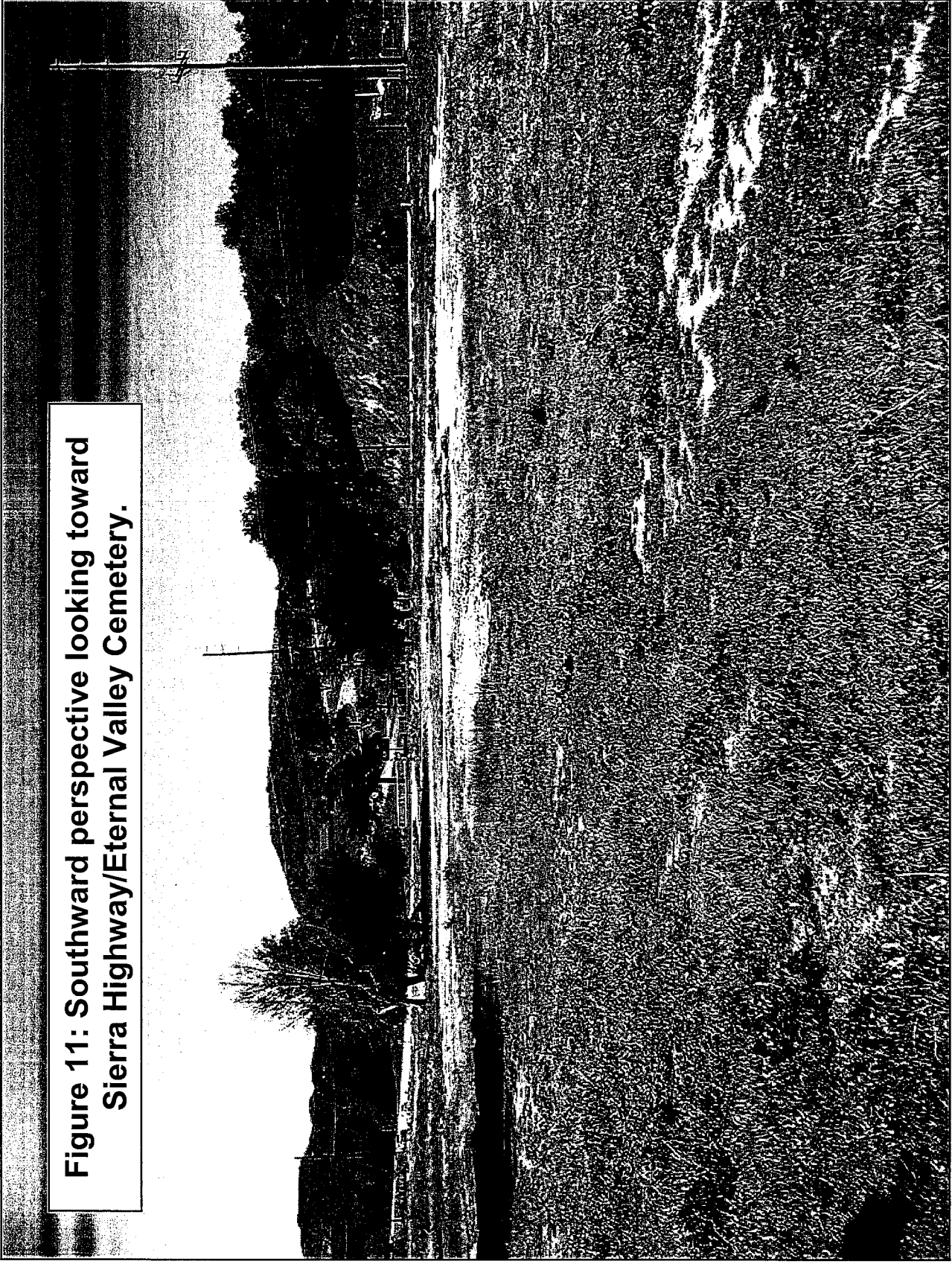


Figure 12: Southward perspective taking in the entire project site.



Figure 13: Looking eastward toward the riparian (preserve) area.

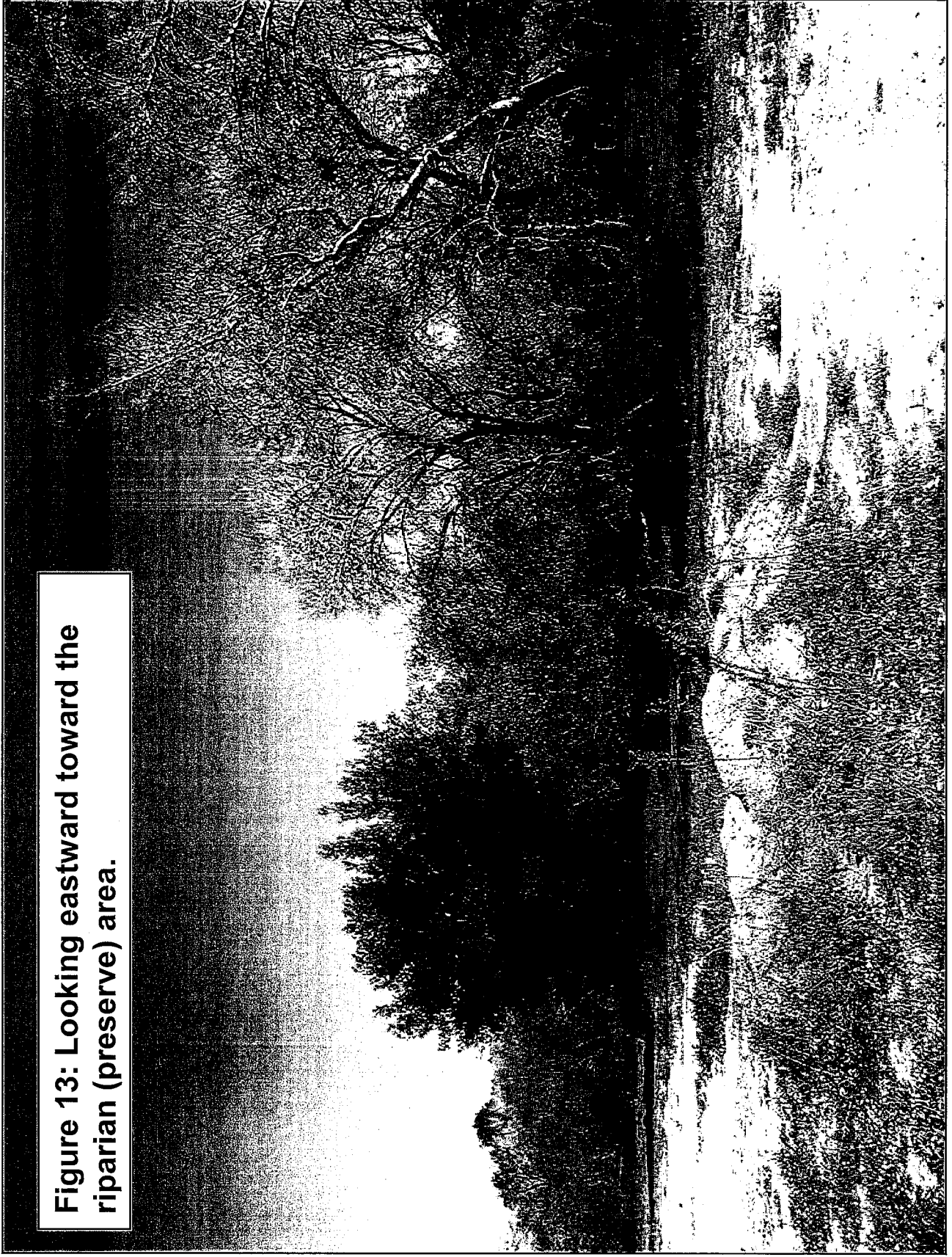




Figure 14: Old home site.



Figure 15: Sierra Highway drainage entering the gully.

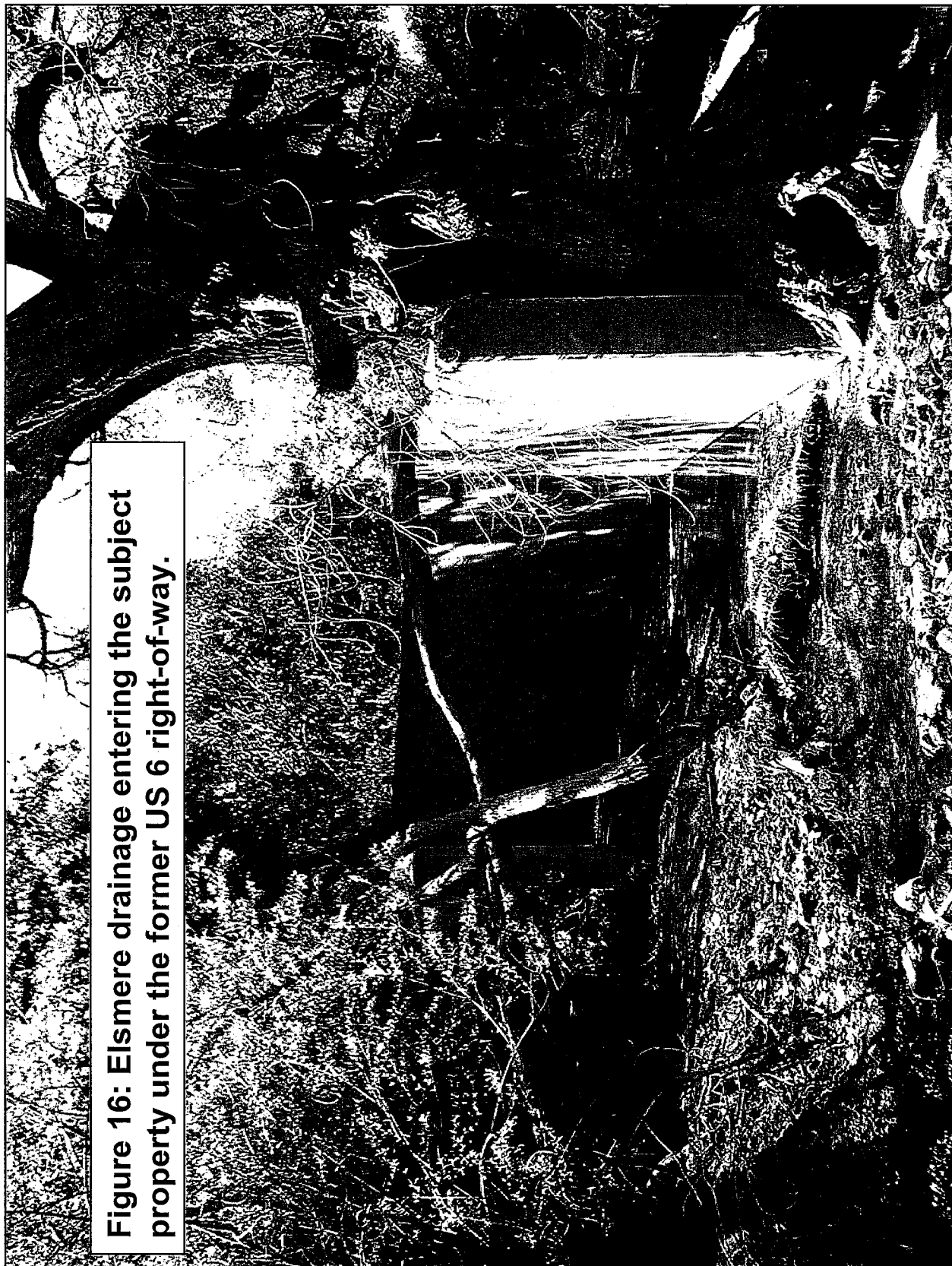


Figure 16: Elsmere drainage entering the subject property under the former US 6 right-of-way.

Figure 17: Riparian area looking
north toward Newhall Avenue.

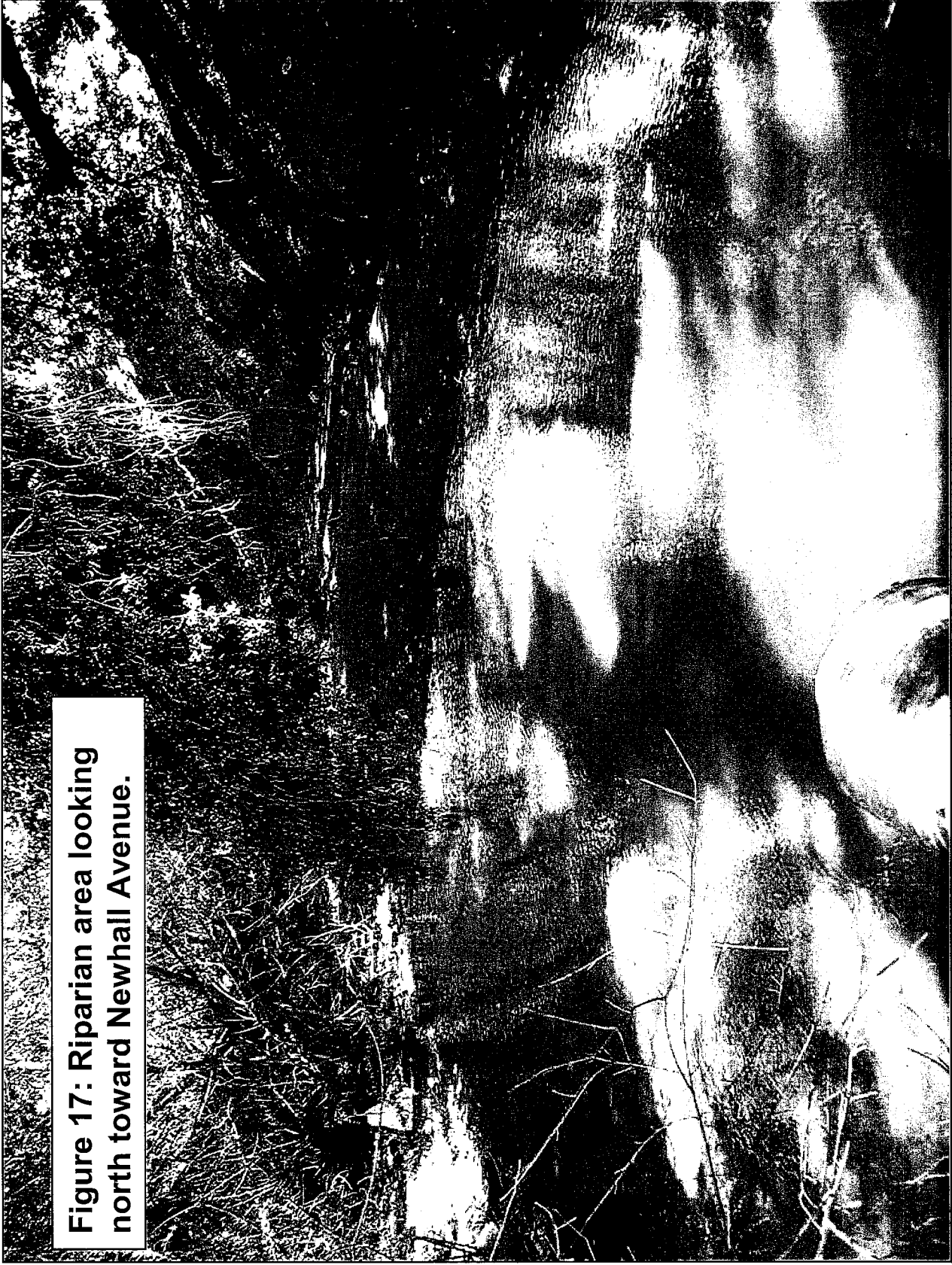




Figure 18: Newhall Creek entering culvert under Newhall Avenue.

A. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:


The environmental factors checked below would be affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" or a "Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hydrology & Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use & Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population & Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traffic & Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities & Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance | |

B. DETERMINATION:

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measures described on an attached sheet have been added to the project. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant impact on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect(s) on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been mitigated adequately in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets, if the effect is a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated." An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there WILL NOT be a significant effect in this case because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project.


Signature

5/11/09
Date

BEN JARVIS
Printed Name

CITY OF SANTA CLARITA
For

C. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
I. AESTHETICS - Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, primary/secondary ridgelines, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES - In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
III. AIR QUALITY - Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions that exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?				
d)	Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e)	Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f)	<u>Other: Climate Change/Greenhouse Gas Emissions</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES - Would the project:					
a)	Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d)	Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e)	Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? Oak trees?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f)	Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g)	Affect a Significant Ecological Area (SEA) or Significant Natural Area (SNA) as identified on the City of Santa Clarita ESA Delineation Map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES - Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in '15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to '15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Directly or indirectly destroy or impact a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS – Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial wind or water soil erosion or the loss of topsoil, either on or off site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1997), creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Change in topography of a primary or secondary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
	ridgeline?				
g)	Move or generate grading of earth exceeding 100,000 cubic yards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS - Would the project:					
a)	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving explosion or the release of hazardous materials into the environment (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, fuels, or radiation)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c)	Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d)	Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or to the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e)	For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f)	For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g)	Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h)	Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i)	Exposure of people to existing sources of potential health hazards (e.g. electrical transmission lines, gas lines, oil pipelines)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY - Would the project:					
a)	Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d)	Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e)	Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f)	Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g)	Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h)	Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i)	Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j)	Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
k)	Changes in the rate of flow, currents, or the course and directions of surface water and/or groundwater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
l)	Other modification of a wash, channel, creek, or river?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m)	Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
i.) Potential impact of project construction and project post-construction activity on storm water runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Potential discharges from areas for materials storage, vehicle or equipment fueling, vehicle or equipment maintenance (including washing), waste handling, hazardous materials handling or storage, delivery areas or loading docks, or other outdoor work areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Significant environmentally harmful increase in the flow velocity or volume of storm water runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Significant and environmentally harmful increases in erosion of the project site or surrounding areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v) Storm water discharges that would significantly impair or contribute to the impairment of the beneficial uses of receiving waters or areas that provide water quality benefits (e.g., riparian corridors, wetlands, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
vi) Cause harm to the biological integrity of drainage systems, watersheds, and/or water bodies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
vii) Does the proposed project include provisions for the separation, recycling, and reuse of materials both during construction and after project occupancy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING - Would the project:

a) Disrupt or physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, and/or policies by agencies with jurisdiction over the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

X. MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES - Would the project:

a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?				
c) Use nonrenewable resources in a wasteful and inefficient manner?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XI. NOISE - Would the project result in:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING — Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, Necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES - Would the project result in:				
a) Substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of				

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
i) Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv) Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XIV. RECREATION - Would the project:

a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC — Would the project:

a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
h) Hazards or barriers for pedestrians or bicyclists?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS - Would the project:

a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE:

a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
projects)?				
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section and Subsections Evaluation of Impacts

I. AESTHETICS

I a. Less Than Significant Impact.

The project site is a 10.28-acre parcel that is located at the southeast corner of Sierra Highway and Newhall Avenue, in the vicinity of the Antelope Valley Freeway. The development would consist of five buildings, the tallest being four stories. The property is generally flat, is not situated on a hillside, and ranges between 1,374' and 1,428' in elevation. The site is located along Sierra Highway and is bordered by hills to the west (Eternal Valley Cemetery) and the Antelope Valley Freeway embankment to the east.

The proposed project would affect views in the area by placing structures as tall as four stories next to Sierra Highway. The project would not block views from existing neighborhoods located off Dockweiler Drive, nor would the project significantly impair the view shed of the wilderness areas located east of the Antelope Valley Freeway. The project site is not located along a scenic vista. Therefore, any visual or aesthetic impacts created by the project would be less than significant.

I b. Less Than Significant Impact

The project is not located along a state scenic highway, does not impact ridgelines, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings. Some vegetation would be lost due to project grading, including eight (8) non-heritage oak trees; however project landscaping and oak plantings would add new foliage where none existed before. Therefore, any impacts would be less than significant.

I c. Less Than Significant Impact

The proposed project will change the character of the area and its surroundings in that the project will develop a parcel that is currently vacant. The project will create a community entry statement where none currently exists. The proposed development is subject to the City's development standards and the aesthetic details of the project, including the site's architectural and landscape plans, are subject to City review. This ensures that the development will be designed with high professional standards and will be consistent with the aesthetic character of the City and the Newhall community. Therefore, while the project would alter the aesthetics of the site, it would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the site or the nearby vicinity, and would not cause any significant impacts concerning aesthetics. The project site is located within an area that has been identified as a City gateway in the Santa Clarita General Plan. Per the General Plan, developments in this area must provide a sense of entry into the community. The proposed development meets all height, density, and setback requirements in the City's Unified Development Code (UDC) and would be consistent with surrounding land uses and structures. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact to the visual character or quality of the site or its surroundings.

I d. Less Than Significant Impact

The proposed project will add light sources to the immediate area; however, additional light would not be significant. The project is located within a commercially-zoned area and is surrounded by other businesses including a fast food restaurant, a gas station, vehicle storage yard, and a cemetery. The project would include street lights, parking lot lights, outdoor lights on the buildings, and other lights along pedestrian sidewalks and paths-of-travel. In accordance with the City's UDC, all light sources will be covered and focused downward to prevent glare and spillover onto adjacent properties as well as the riparian area.

The light generated on-site would not detract from daytime or nighttime views nor would it adversely affect surrounding businesses. Therefore, the project would neither cause nor create significant impacts due to light or glare.

II. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

II a. No Impact

There are no agricultural operations located on the project site. The city of Santa Clarita's General Plan does not identify any important farmlands or any area for farmland uses. The site is in the CC(PD) zone and is not within an area of Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance as identified by the California Department of Conservation. Therefore, development of the proposed project would have no impact to agricultural resources.

II b. No Impact

According to the City of Santa Clarita General Plan, there are no agriculturally-zoned lands within the city limits. Likewise, there are no Williamson Act contract lands within the City. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with zoning for agricultural use or Williamson Act contracts, and would have no impacts to agricultural resources.

II c. No Impact

The site is vacant and not used for agricultural purposes. There are no agricultural land uses in the City of Santa Clarita. The proposed project consists of general commercial/retail uses in a designated commercial zone; therefore, the project will not have any impact that could result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses.

III. AIR QUALITY

III a. Less Than Significant Impact

Since the proposed project is consistent with the CC zoning and General Plan designation of the site, the proposed project would not exceed Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) growth projections upon which regional air quality planning is based. Consequently, the project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Air Quality Management Plan for the South Coast region.

III b, c. Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation

The project site is within the South Coast Air Basin, which includes all of the non-desert portions of Los Angeles County. Although air quality in the southern California region continues to improve as additional pollution controls are implemented, the air basin remains a non-attainment area for both the federal and state standards for ozone, fine particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM_{10}), and fine particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter ($PM_{2.5}$). Ozone is a pollutant that is formed by a chemical reaction involving reactive organic gasses (ROG) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) in the presence of sunlight.

The proposed development would generate vehicle trips and increase consumption of electricity and natural gas, which would generate air pollutant emissions. Such emissions would have the potential to adversely affect local and regional air quality.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) has adopted numeric thresholds for various "criteria" air pollutants that are used to assess a project's impact to regional air quality. A project's impact on regional air

quality is considered significant if project operation would result in emissions exceeding:

- 55 pounds per day of reactive organic gasses (ROG)
- 55 pounds per day of nitrogen oxides (NO_x)
- 550 pounds per day of carbon monoxide (CO)
- 150 pounds per day of PM₁₀
- 55 pounds per day of PM_{2.5}
- 150 pounds per day of sulfur oxides (SO_x)

The URBEMIS2007 (Version 9.2.4) air quality model produced by the California Air Resources Board (ARB) was used to estimate emissions associated with operation of the proposed project. The results of the modeling are included as Appendix A of this document, and the estimated area and operational pollutant emissions are shown in Table III-1.

As shown in Table III-1, project-generated emissions during operation would be less than SCAQMD thresholds for all five criteria air pollutants. Consequently, the project's impact on regional air quality is not considered significant.

Table III-1 Area and Operational Air Pollutant Emissions/SCAQMD Regional Threshold Comparison Matrix			
Pollutant	Emissions (lbs/day)	Threshold (lbs/day)	Threshold Exceeded?
ROG	17.85	55	No
NO _x	21.37	55	No
CO	157.15	550	No
SO ₂	.014	150	No
PM ₁₀	23.51	150	No
PM _{2.5}	4.61	55	No
<i>Emissions calculated using URBEMIS2007 computer model, California Air Resources Board. See Appendix A for model outputs.</i>			

In addition to operational emissions, construction of the proposed project would generate air pollutants. Construction-induced air pollutants include fugitive dust (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) from earth movement and equipment exhaust, which includes NO_x, ROGs and CO. Of note, SCAQMD's Rule 403, which regulates/limits the generation of fugitive dust (particulate matter) during construction, would apply to the project. Table III-2 compares the project's construction emissions as estimated with the URBEMIS 2007 model to the SCAQMD's significance thresholds, which are:

- 75 pounds per day of reactive organic compounds (ROC)
- 100 pounds per day of nitrogen oxides (NO_x)
- 550 pounds per day of carbon monoxide (CO)
- 150 pounds per day of PM₁₀
- 55 pounds per day of PM_{2.5}
- 150 pounds per day of sulfur oxides (SO_x)

As shown in Table III-2, after mitigation, construction of the proposed project would be less than SCAQMD's thresholds for all five criteria pollutants.

Consequently, the project's construction impact to regional air quality is less than significant with the implementation of the mitigation measures below:

Mitigation Measure AQ-1:

During grading and construction, fugitive dust emissions shall not exceed the performance standards in SCAQMD Rule 403.

Mitigation Measure AQ-2:

During grading and construction, active areas and haul roads shall be watered at least twice (two times) per day.

Mitigation Measure AQ-3:

During construction, replace ground cover in disturbed areas as quickly as possible. Disturbed surfaces shall be maintained in a stabilized condition using water or other chemical dust suppressant until ground cover is replaced.

Mitigation Measure AQ-4: Off-road vehicles on-site shall not travel at speeds greater than 15 miles per hour.

Table III-2: Construction Air Pollutant Emissions/SCAQMD Regional Threshold Comparison Matrix			
Pollutant	Emissions (lbs/day)	Threshold (lbs/day)	Threshold Exceeded?
ROG	66.18	75	No
NO _x	89.44	100	No
CO	40.55	550	No
SO ₂	0.06	150	No
PM ₁₀	23.73*	150	No
PM _{2.5}	7.81*	55	No
<p>*After Mitigation</p> <p><i>Emissions calculated using URBEMIS2007 computer model, California Air Resources Board. See Appendix A for model outputs. The maximum daily emissions for each pollutant are presented. The highest emissions will occur during different construction phases for different pollutants. For example, the highest ROG emissions would occur during building construction, while the highest NO_x emissions would occur during fine grading of the site.</i></p>			

In addition to the regional significance thresholds, the SCAQMD identifies Localized Significance Thresholds (LST) for stationary pollutant sources and construction sites. Since the proposed project would not be a stationary pollutant source, only the construction LSTs apply to this project. The appropriate LSTs vary on a project-by-project basis depending on the project's location, the acreage of the construction site, and the distance to the nearest sensitive receptor. For this project, the appropriate LSTs are for the Santa Clarita Valley, for a 5-acre (or greater) site, where sensitive receptors are at least 100 meters from the site.

Table III-3 compares the peak-day construction emissions to the relevant LSTs. As shown in this table, with the implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-1 through AQ-4, the proposed project would not generate pollutants in excess of the LSTs. Therefore, the proposed project's impact on local air quality is less than significant.

Table III-3: Construction Air Pollutant Emissions/SCAQMD LST Comparison Matrix			
Pollutant	Emissions (lbs/day)	Threshold (lbs/day)	Threshold Exceeded?
NO _x	66.18	233	No
CO	89.44	2,922	No
PM ₁₀	23.73*	52	No
PM _{2.5}	7.81*	13	No
<p>*After Mitigation</p> <p>** Source: SCAQMD Localized Significance Threshold Methodology, Appendix C Mass Rate Look-Up Tables. LSTs used are for a 5-acre (or greater) site in the Santa Clarita Valley, with sensitive receptors at least 100 meters away.</p> <p>Emissions calculated using URBEMIS2007 computer model, California Air Resources Board. See Appendix A for model outputs. The maximum daily emissions for each pollutant are presented. The highest emissions will occur during different construction phases for different pollutants. For example, the highest ROG emissions would occur during building construction, while the highest NO_x emissions would occur during fine grading of the site.</p>			

III d. Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation

The closest sensitive receptors to the project site are the residential uses on the west side of Sierra Highway, which are located more than 100 meters from the project site. As discussed above in part III(b-c), both the operational and construction impacts of the project were found to be below SCAQMD pollutant emission thresholds. In particular, the project's emissions, after mitigation, were found to be below the LSTs and, as such, the proposed project is not anticipated to cause localized concentrations of air pollutants to reach unhealthful levels. Therefore, the proposed project, after mitigation, would not cause sensitive receptors to be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations, and the project's impact on sensitive receptors is less than significant with the implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-1 through AQ-4.

III e. Less Than Significant Impact

The proposed project is not anticipated to generate objectionable odors other than potential short-term odors from construction equipment and occasional localized odors from food preparation and/or refuse areas. Such odors are anticipated to dissipate rapidly and would not noticeably affect any residential uses. Therefore, the proposed project's odor impacts are less than significant.

III f. Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation

"Greenhouse gases," so called because of their role in trapping heat near the surface of the earth, are emitted by human activity and are implicated in global climate change. This is more commonly referred to as "global warming." These greenhouse gases contribute to an increase in the temperature of the earth's atmosphere by transparency to short wavelength visible sunlight, but near opacity to outgoing terrestrial long wavelength heat radiation. The principal greenhouse gases (GHGs) include carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane, and nitrous oxide. Collectively GHGs are measured as carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e).

Fossil fuel consumption in the transportation sector (on-road motor vehicles, off-highway mobile sources, and aircraft) is the single largest source of GHG emissions, accounting for approximately half of GHG emissions globally.

Industrial and commercial sources are the second largest contributors of GHG emissions with about one-fourth of total emissions.

California has passed several bills and the Governor has signed at least three executive orders regarding greenhouse gases. GHG statutes and executive orders (EO) include Assembly Bill (AB) 32, Senate Bill (SB) 1368, Executive Order (EO) S-03-05, EO S-20-06 and EO S-01-07.

AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, is one of the most significant pieces of environmental legislation that California has adopted. Among other things, it is designed to maintain California's reputation as a "national and international leader on energy conservation and environmental stewardship." Most notably AB 32 mandates that by 2020, California's GHG emissions be reduced to 1990 levels. As of yet, the State of California has not set thresholds for GHG emissions, but is likely to do so in the future. In the meantime, local and regional agencies are left to determine their own approach for reducing GHGs.

The project's GHG emissions were calculated using the URBEMIS2007 model along with manual calculations for electricity and natural gas demand. Manual calculations were also used to estimate the project's methane and nitrous oxide emissions. The project's GHG calculation spreadsheets are included in Appendix A of this document. The proposed project is estimated to generate 3,130.28 metric tons per year of CO₂e. The following mitigation measures would reduce the project's GHG emissions to a less than significant level:

Mitigation Measure AQ-5:

To the satisfaction of the City of Santa Clarita, the project shall have greater energy efficiency than Title 24 standards.

Mitigation Measure AQ-6:

To the satisfaction of the City of Santa Clarita, the project shall comply with the following "GHG Reduction" policies of the City's Draft General Plan:

Policy:

Promote construction of **energy efficient buildings** through requirements for LEED certification or through comparable alternative requirements as adopted by local ordinance.

Policy:

Encourage on-site solar generation of electricity in **new retail and office** commercial buildings and associated parking lots, carports, and garages, in concert with significant energy conservation efforts.

Policy:

Encourage new development to use **passive solar heating** and cooling techniques in building design and construction, which may include but are not be limited to building orientation, clerestory windows, skylights, placement and type of windows, overhangs to shade doors and windows, and use of light colored roofs and paving materials.

Policy:

Encourage the use of trees and landscaping to reduce heating and cooling energy loads, through **shading** of buildings and parking lots.

Policy:

Encourage **energy-conserving** heating and cooling systems and appliances, and energy-efficiency in windows and insulation, in all new construction.

Policy:

Limit **excessive lighting levels**, and encourage a reduction of lighting when businesses are closed to a level required for security.

Policy:

Provide **incentives and technical assistance** for installation of energy-efficient improvements in existing and new buildings.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The following biological resource evaluations were prepared for the project and are the basis of the analysis in this section:

- *Biological Assessment, Sierra Crossing*, Forde Biological Consultants, February 19, 2008; and follow-up letter to Mike Redmond from Forde Biological Consultants, dated December 16, 2008;
- *Sierra Crossing, Special-Status Plant Species Surveys*, Forde Biological Consultants, October 1, 2008;
- *Jurisdictional Delineation, Sierra Crossing*, Forde Biological Consultants, February 14, 2008;
- *Results of Protocol Surveys for the Least Bell's Vireo and Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, San Fernando Project Site, City of Santa Clarita, Los Angeles County, California*, Ecological Sciences, Inc. September 5, 2006
- *Agreement Regarding Proposed Stream or Lake Alteration* (i.e., Draft Streambed Alteration Agreement), between the California Department of Fish and Game and Mike Redmond of SFXS Partners LLC; and
- *Oak Tree Survey Report*, Impact Sciences, February 28, 2007.
- *Oak tree #88 at "Sierra Crossing project (233300 San Fernando Rd.)*, Jan C. Scow Consulting Arborists, LLC, August 28, 2008.

These reports are available for review as part of the project file at the City of Santa Clarita Planning Counter, 23920 Valencia Blvd., Suite 302, Santa Clarita, CA 91355.

General Biological Characteristics of the Site

The project site contains two habitat types – ruderal/disturbed habitat and Willow Riparian Forest. The ruderal/disturbed habitat occupies the majority of the site and is dominated by non-native grasses and forbs, with scattered coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) and western sycamores (*Platanus racemosa*). This portion of the site is regularly maintained for weed abatement.

The Willow Riparian Forest community on-site is centered around Newhall Creek, which traverses the eastern portion of site, flowing from south to north. This plant community is dominated by arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), western sycamore (along the creek's western bank), and coast live oak (along the creek's eastern bank).

IV a. Less Than Significant With Mitigation

Given the presence of Willow Riparian Forest, the project site has the potential to support a variety of special-status plant and animal species. Review of the

California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) by Forde Biological Consultants (FBC) revealed 29 special-status plant species have been officially observed within the project region (i.e., the area encompassed by the Mint Canyon 7.5" USGS Quadrangle and the surrounding 8 quadrangles).

The project site was surveyed for special-status plant species by FBC, with three site investigations occurring in October, June, and May of 2008. No special-status plants were observed on-site. In addition, FBC concludes, "Due to the geographic location of the property, elevation range, soil types, and lack of suitable habitat, the majority of the species considered are not expected to occur or were determined to have a low potential to occur by the biologists based on the presence of marginal habitat." However, FBC determined that there is potential for Davidson's bush mallow (*Malacothamnus davidsonii*) (a California Native Plant Society (CNPS) List 1B.2¹ species) and Greata's aster (*Symphotrichum greatae*) (CNPS List 1.B.3²) to occur within areas adjacent to the Willow Riparian Forest.

To ensure the project would not impact Davidson's bush mallow or Greata's aster, and to ensure special-status plants have not propagated on-site and thus be impacted by project construction, Mitigation Measure BIO-1 requires that a pre-construction survey for special-status plants be conducted and any such plants found on-site to be protected, preserved, or relocated. With the incorporation of this measure, the project would not significantly impact any special-status plants.

The review of the CNDDDB for the Mint Canyon 7.5" USGS Quadrangle and the surrounding 8 quadrangles revealed the potential for 26 special-status animal species to occur in the project region. FBC concludes the following in their Biological Assessment of the project site regarding special-status fish, amphibians, lizards, and mammals:

- The San Diego desert woodrat (a California species of special concern (CSC)) has a high potential to occur and a woodrat house was observed on-site by FBC.
- The silvery legless lizard (CSC) has a high potential to occur within the area dominated by Willow Riparian Forest above the ordinary high water mark.
- Somewhat suitable habitat for the western pond turtle (CSC) exists on-site where pools in Newhall Creek are created by high velocity flows through culverts.
- The project ornithologist, Jim Greaves, observed an individual of the *Lepus* genus on-site. There is one member of the genus in California, the black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*). FBC did not observe this species on the property and does not expect it to occur based on lack of suitable habitat. FBC concluded that the species observed by Jim Greaves is a member of the *Sylvilagus* genus.
- FBC does not expect any special-status fish or the two-striped garter

¹ CNPS List 1B = Plants rare, threatened or endangered (RTE) in California and elsewhere. CNPS recognizes the following degrees of RTE in California: (1B.1) Seriously threatened in California; (1B.2) Fairly threatened in California; (1B.3) Not very threatened in California. Of note, the CNPS designations are not formal designations of any regulatory agency but plants listed by the CNPS are considered special-status for CEQA purposes.

² Ibid.

snake (a special-status reptile) to occur on-site due to historical conditions and the intermittent nature of Newhall Creek and the presence of several culverts that would restrict movement.

- The stretch of Newhall Creek on-site lacks suitable breeding pools for the arroyo toad and red-legged frog. There are no seasonal upland ponds for western spadefoot toad (special-status amphibians) and, as such, these species are not expected to occur on-site.
- FBC does not expect coast-horned lizard (a special-status lizard) to occur on-site due to the lack of suitable habitat and prey.

Mitigation Measures BIO-2 through BIO-5 are included to ensure the project would not significantly impact the San Diego desert woodrat, silvery legless lizard, western pond turtle, or the San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit. With the incorporation of these mitigation measures the proposed project would not significantly impact any special-status fish, amphibians, lizards, and mammals.

In addition to these terrestrial and aquatic species, the project site has the potential to support a variety special-status birds. In particular, the Willow Riparian Forest on-site could support two formally listed bird species – the Least bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) (LBVI), which is a state and federally listed endangered species, and the southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) (SWFL), a federally listed endangered species. To determine if these species were present on-site, Ecological Sciences, Inc. (ESI) conducted protocol surveys in accordance with US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) guidelines in 2006. ESI concluded that both species were absent from the site in 2006. Since protocol surveys are valid for a period of 1 year, Mitigation Measure BIO-6, requires updated surveys be prepared for these two species within one year of project construction.

While the protocol surveys conducted on-site did not discover LBVI or SWFL, 47 other bird species were discovered on-site, of which at least 9 bred on-site in 2006. None of the birds found to be breeding on-site are special-status species. However, one observed bird species on-site, the yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia brewsteri*), is a CSC. This is consistent with the project's Biological Assessment, which concludes that two CA species of special concern, the yellow warbler and the Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), have the potential to nest on-site. Mitigation Measure BIO-7 ensures the project would not impact any nesting yellow warblers, Cooper's hawk, or any other nesting birds, which are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the CDFG Code. With the incorporation of Mitigation Measures BIO-6 and BIO-7, the project's impact on special-status birds is considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1:

No greater than 30 days prior to construction, the project site shall be surveyed for special-status plants by a qualified botanist. While the survey shall be conducted for all special-status plants, the botanist shall specifically determine if Davidson's bush mallow or Greata's aster are present on-site. If any special-status plant species are encountered, avoidance, transplant, or replacement measures shall be undertaken in accordance with the Guidelines for Conducting and Reporting Botanical Inventories for federally Listed, Proposed and Candidate Plants from USFWS's Recovery Plan for Six Plants from the Mountains Surrounding the Los Angeles Basin (USFWS 1999). If any of such plants are eliminated or transplanted, the California Department of Fish and Game shall be notified. If any of these plants are to be transplanted, they shall be

planted in a suitable location under the supervision of a qualified biologist. Temporary irrigation shall be provided to transplanted plants until such time that they are able to survive on their own.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2:

A qualified biological monitor with all required collection permits shall be on-site during the vegetation removal and grading operations and shall survey for species prior to these activities. If any life stages of any native vertebrate species are found in the path of construction, the monitor shall relocate the species to a pre-determined, safe location. Exclusionary devices shall be erected to prevent the migration into or the return of the species into the work site.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3:

The Applicant shall have a qualified wildlife biologist survey the area to confirm the presence/absence of silvery legless lizard, black-tailed jackrabbit, woodrat, and/or other species of concern likely to be found in the area during construction. If evidence exists that additional surveys are required, survey techniques, timing, and schedule shall be subject to the review and approval of the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). Survey results, analysis, and recommendations, along with the filed notes shall be provided to the CDFG prior to commencing construction or within two weeks of completion of field surveys, whichever is earlier. Should any sensitive species be found during pre-project surveys, and work must be done in identified areas during sensitive periods, the applicant shall develop and implement a plan for the protection of these species. This plan shall be approved by the CDFG prior to commencing work. The results of any surveys and any protective measures instituted, as part of the protection and monitoring plan, shall be provided to the CDFG within one week from implementation. The applicant shall be responsible for reporting all observations of threatened/endangered species or of species of special concern to the CNDDDB within ten days of sighting.

Mitigation Measure BIO-4:

The applicant shall not allow any activity near the nesting sites of the woodrat during the recognized nesting, rearing, and dispersal season, which is November through April. The applicant shall develop a relocation plan to ensure the protection of this species. This plan shall include the trapping of individuals and the relocation of the nests to a suitable open space area outside of the project footprint. Trapping shall occur for a minimum of three nights and any captured woodrats or other small mammals shall be released outside of the project's footprint (e.g., in the Willow Riparian Forest preserve area). The method of breaking up the nest shall be in a manner that allows any individual in the nest to escape without being harmed (e.g., dismantled by hand). This shall be done during the late afternoon hours. These activities shall be done outside of the woodrat breeding/rearing season to avoid impacts to this species.

Mitigation Measure BIO-5:

Immediately prior to construction (within 1 day prior to construction), the project site shall be raked for silvery legless lizard by a qualified biologist. Any discovered silvery legless lizards shall be released into the Willow Riparian Forest preserve area. Exclusionary devices shall be erected to prevent the migration into or the return of the species into the work site.

Mitigation Measure BIO-6:

Prior to the issuance of a grading permit and no greater than one year from the start of construction, updated protocol surveys for the least Bell's vireo and the southwestern willow flycatcher shall be conducted by a permitted biologist in

accordance with US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) guidelines. If either species is determined to be present on-site, the City of Santa Clarita shall not issue a grading permit for the project until the appropriate take permits have been issued by the FWS and/or the CDFG.

Mitigation BIO-7:

The applicant shall not remove or otherwise disturb vegetation or conduct any other project activities on the project site from March 1 to September 15 to avoid impacts to breeding/nesting birds. If work during the breeding/nesting season cannot be avoided then, prior to construction or site preparation activities, the applicant shall have a qualified biologist survey all breeding/nesting habitat within the project site and adjacent to the project site for breeding/nesting birds. Surveys shall be conducted for 5 consecutive days or other methodology acceptable to CDFG. If active nests are present, the nest-site shall be protected by a 300-foot buffer (500 feet for raptors) or as determined by CDFG. No construction activities will be allowed within the buffer area until the nest becomes inactive (the young have fledged, the young are no longer being fed by the parents, the young have left the area, and the young will no longer be impacted by the project).

If there are no nests present, vegetation should be removed within 3 days after completion of the survey. Documentation of findings, including a negative finding must be submitted to the CDFG for review and concurrence. If no breeding/nesting birds are observed and concurrence has been received from the CDFG, site preparation and construction activities may begin.

IV b, c. Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation

As noted, the project site contains Willow Riparian Forest, which is a sensitive riparian community. The Willow Riparian Forest on-site is centered around Newhall Creek, which is a jurisdictional watercourse pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and Section 1602 of the CDFG code.

FBC prepared a Jurisdictional Delineation report for the project, which determined that the project site contains 3.313 acres of CDFG jurisdictional streambed/riparian habitat and 950 linear feet of Newhall Creek that is within the jurisdiction of the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) pursuant to Section 404 of the CWA. The Corps jurisdictional land on-site is limited to the bed and bank of Newhall Creek, as no wetlands meeting Section 404 criteria exist on-site outside of the creek's ordinary high water mark.

The proposed project would impact 1.283 acres of CDFG jurisdictional riparian habitat/streambed (of which 0.183 were previously impacted by site maintenance activities) and 0.11 acres of the Corps jurisdictional watercourse (300 linear feet). By law, the project proponent will be required to enter into a Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA) with the CDFG for impacting 1.283 acres of riparian habitat; and the applicant will also be required by law to obtain a Section 404 permit from the Corps for filling 0.11 acres of a jurisdictional watercourse. The project applicant has entered into a draft Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA) with the CDFG, which accounts for both the 0.183 acres of CDFG jurisdictional habitat that were previously impacted and the additional 1.1 acres that would be impacted by the proposed project. Mitigation Measures BIO-8 through BIO-10 are based on the requirements included in this draft SAA and would reduce the project's impacts on riparian habitat and Newhall Creek to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measure BIO-8:

The project proponent shall provide replacement Willow Riparian habitat to the satisfaction of the CDFG at a ratio of 7:1 (replacement to impacts) for the 0.183 acres of habitat previously impacted and at a ratio of 3:1 (replacement to impacts) for the 1.10 acres impacted by the proposed project.

Mitigation Measure BIO-9:

A 50-foot wide buffer of native vegetation shall be provided along the mitigation area and along all riparian and wetland drainages. The buffer shall serve to minimize the amount of light, noise, and other human generated impacts on the streambed habitat. All fuel modification activities shall be conducted outside of the streambed and native vegetation buffer area.

Mitigation Measure BIO-10:

The limits of the project's construction footprint shall be flagged prior to any construction activities on-site. Vegetation shall not be removed or intentionally damaged beyond these limits.

IV d. Less Than Significant Impact

The ability of wildlife to move from one tract of habitat to another increases the value of the habitat. Habitats with wildlife movement opportunities allow for population dispersal and seasonal migration, and increase the area for home range activities. Wildlife movement opportunities are often called wildlife corridors.

The project site does not connect two tracts of habitat. Rather, the site is surrounded on all sides by roads, highways, and urban development, which act as impediments to wildlife movement. In particular, the Antelope Valley Freeway substantially restricts wildlife movement between the project site and the Angeles National Forest, which lies to the east of the site. Additionally, the use of Newhall Creek as a wildlife travel route is greatly prohibited by the various storm drain improvements on- and off-site. The culvert under Newhall Avenue, in particular, includes a drop-off that would prevent most wildlife movement.

Due to the aforementioned, development of the proposed project would not restrict the migration or dispersal of wildlife. Therefore, the proposed project would not significantly impact wildlife movement.

IV e. Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation

The City of Santa Clarita's Oak Tree Ordinance (Ordinance 88-34) is the only local policy or ordinance that protects biological resources. This ordinance establishes regulatory measures that mandate the manner in which oak trees may be removed, pruned, cut or encroached upon. Oak trees subject to this ordinance include any tree of the oak genus *Quercus*, which includes, valley oaks, California live oaks, canyon oaks, interior live oaks, and scrub oaks regardless of size. Per the Oak Tree Ordinance, in order to remove or modify any trees on the project site, an applicant will need to secure an Oak Tree Permit from the City.

According to the project's Oak Tree Survey Report prepared by Impact Sciences and the supplemental survey of oak tree #88 by Jan C. Scow (JCS) Consulting Arborists, the project site contains 40 oak trees. All of these trees are coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*), with the exception of tree 22, which is a scrub oak (*Quercus berberidifolia*). Trees 5, 8, 13, 28, and 36 are considered heritage oaks and have a diameter at breast height (dbh) of at least 30 inches.

None of the heritage oaks on-site would be removed or relocated as part of the project. However, the project does involve the removal of eight (8) oaks – trees 1, 2, 29-33, and 37. Table IV-1 identifies the type, size, and value of the oak trees to be removed. In addition to these removals, the project would encroach into the protected areas of Oak Tree Nos. 28(H), 34, 35, and 36(H). Each of the encroached-upon trees is a Coast Live Oak and two (#28 and #36) are heritage specimens.

Table IV-1 Trees Proposed for Removal			
Tree Number	Type	Diameter at Breast Height (dbh in inches)	Appraised Value
1	Coast Live Oak	22	\$13,843.00
2	Coast Live Oak	16, 15	\$8,014.00
29	Coast Live Oak	12	\$4,615.00
30	Coast Live Oak	12	\$4,392.00
31	Coast Live Oak	8	\$2,237.00
32	Coast Live Oak	19, 15, 13	\$12,141.00
33	Coast Live Oak	20, 13, 12	\$13,682.00
37	Coast Live Oak	15	\$7,355.00

Since implementation of project activities will result in the loss of eight (8) mature oak trees protected by the City's Ordinance, the following mitigation measures shall be incorporated into the project to lessen the impacts to an insignificant level:

Mitigation Measure BIO-11:

In order to avoid accidental damage or disturbance to oak trees on or near the site, prior to the issuance of grading permit all oak trees on site that are not approved for removal and all oak trees within 50 feet of the potential area of ground disturbance shall be fenced at their protected zones with a minimum 4' high fence before any site grading commences. Fencing shall remain during all phases of construction and shall not be moved or removed without City approval.

Mitigation Measure BIO-12:

In order to avoid accidental damage or disturbance to oak trees on or near the site during construction, no equipment storage, debris drop, or parking shall occur within the drip lines of any oak tree not approved for removal.

Mitigation Measure BIO-13:

Pursuant to the City of Santa Clarita's Oak Tree Ordinance (Ordinance 88-34) and to the satisfaction of the City's Oak Tree Specialist, the oak trees removed from the site shall be replaced with oak trees at a value commensurate with the fully appraised value of the trees removed. A planting plan shall be provided to the City for approval of trees with locations and sizes, and three years of maintenance shall be provided to ensure the trees survive.

Mitigation Measure BIO-14: Oak Tree Maintenance

- A. Arborist of Record Agreement – The applicant shall retain an Arborist of Record (AOR) to assist with Mitigation Measure compliance. The AOR will review the landscape plans and provide recommendations as needed.

Landscaping – Landscaping shall follow the City's minimum requirements;

1. Plantings within any oak tree protected zone must be drought tolerant only;
 2. No spray-type irrigation systems are permitted within the protected zone;
 3. A three-inch layer of organic mulch will be installed within the protected zone;
 4. Landscape plans are subject to City approval.
- B. Monitoring after construction – The applicant shall obtain the authorization of future residents or owners allowing continued access by the AOR after construction is finished.
- C. The AOR shall visit the property on a quarterly basis for two years after the completion of the project, and semi-annually for one year after that, as required by the City. The AOR shall inspect all mitigation-installed oaks on the property. At the discretion of the AOR, the frequency of the monitoring may be reduced if the oak trees appear to be flourishing and in stable condition.
- D. Per the City requirements, the AOR shall certify that the property is in compliance with all the conditions of the oak tree permit. Observations regarding the oaks' health shall be reported to the City, including if any oaks decline or fail to survive. Oaks failing to survive during the monitoring period, including any that fail to thrive after planting, will be mitigated for as determined by the City.
- E. 48-Hour Notice and Certification of Oak Tree Work: the applicant shall provide 48-hours notice to the department of Community Development before planting the mitigation oak trees or before doing any work on or near them one they are planted. (AOR requires 96-hour notice)
- F. The AOR will evaluate and report the findings to the Department of Community Development regarding the work related to or potentially affecting the planted oak trees. These reports will certify whether all work was conducted in accordance with the oak tree permit and oak tree report. Reports shall be submitted within 10-days of the AOR being informed that the work was completed.
- G. Specifically, the AOR shall review the mitigation plantings and provide a report certifying that the work follows the oak tree permit and acceptable planting standards. The AOR will also evaluate and provide a report to the City as needed on any other work that may affect the mitigation oaks, including but not limited to irrigation installation, pruning anything larger than two-inches in diameter, or installation of sidewalks and other hardscape near mitigation oaks.
- H. Oak Tree Information Package: The applicant shall provide a sample information package to the City for approval if requested. The same packet shall be provided to the property buyer via certified mail. The information included shall be as follows:
1. Cover letter introducing the information packet;
 2. Oak trees-Care and Maintenance;
 3. Oak Tree Ordinance;
 4. Oak Tree Preservation and Protection Guideline; and
 5. Copies of the Development and Oak Tree Permit;

The cover letter will then be forwarded to the Department of Community Development along with the signed copy of the return receipt card.

In addition to the mitigation measures listed here, the applicant is also subject to Conditions of Approval for Master Case 08-033 as approved by the Planning Commission.

IV f. No Impact

The project site is not within a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP), or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. Therefore, the project would not conflict with any adopted habitat conservation plans, and the projects would have no related impacts.

IV g. No Impact

The project site is not located within a Significant Ecological Area identified on either Exhibit OS-2 of the City's General Plan or the Los Angeles County Significant Ecological Area mapping. The project site is also not within a Significant Natural Area identified by the CDFG. The closest such area is the Santa Clara River Corridor Significant Ecological Area, which is far removed from the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact to Significant Ecological Areas or Significant Natural Areas.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

V a. No Impact.

The project site is vacant. The majority of the site has been graded flat and is routinely mowed or grubbed for weed abatement to reduce the risk of fire. Newhall Creek runs through the property and is surrounded by native and non-native vegetation, including oak trees. No historical resources exist on the project site. Most historic resources in the vicinity are associated with railroad development, oil production, and the settlement of the Newhall community which is located several miles north of the project site. No known historical resources are located on subject property and there is no reason to suspect that historic resources will be found during construction.

The project site has been surveyed at least twice in the past for historic resources, most recently in 2005. That survey documented remnants of concrete foundations, conduit, a linoleum floor, and concrete steps. These structural remnants are consistent with a single family home and were not believed to have historic or cultural value. A more in-depth study was conducted by W&S Consultants in January 2009. That study concluded that the foundation remnants date from post-World War II, that the structure no longer maintains integrity, and therefore is not historically significant. City records indicate that the structure was demolished in the early 1990s. No historic resources occur, or are suspected to occur, on-site. Therefore, the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, nor would the project create other impacts to cultural resources.

V b. Less Than Significant With Mitigation

The project site is not known or expected to contain prehistoric or historic archeological sites. The project site has been previously disturbed by highway grading, creek channelization, and residential use. The property is also mowed and grubbed regularly for weed abatement to reduce the risk of fire. An archeological survey was conducted on the site in January 2009 by W&S Consultants. The survey concluded that further archeological work was not

recommended for the property. Given this, it is unlikely that project construction and daily operations would encounter previously undiscovered archeological resources. However, in the event that archeological resources are encountered during grading or construction of the project, Mitigation Measure CUL-1 requires that all project grading and construction be halted until an archeologist examines the site, identifies the archaeological significance of the find, and recommends a course of action. Incorporation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 would ensure that the proposed project would not significantly impact archeological resources.

Mitigation Measure CUL-1

If archaeological resources are encountered during project excavation or construction, all construction activities shall immediately cease until an archeologist certified by the Society of Professional Archeologists examines the site, identifies the archaeological significance of the find, and recommends a course of action. Construction shall not resume until the site archeologist states in writing that the proposed construction activities will not significantly damage archaeological resources, and the City of Santa Clarita concurs with this conclusion.

V c. Less Than Significant Impact

The project site is not known to nor expected to contain paleontological sites. The project site has been previously disturbed by highway grading, streambed channelization, residential uses, and fire prevention/weed abatement activities. While the area is not known to produce significant vertebrate fossils, project construction would involve substantial, deep grading. Such grading could encounter previously undiscovered paleontological resources. As such, in the unlikely event that paleontological resources are encountered during grading or construction of the retail center, Mitigation Measure CUL-2 requires that all project grading and construction efforts be halted until a paleontologist examines the site, identifies the significance of the find, and recommends a course of action. Incorporation of Mitigation Measure CUL-2 would ensure that the proposed project would not significantly impact paleontological resources.

Mitigation Measure CUL-2

If paleontological resources are encountered during project excavation or construction, all construction activities shall immediately cease until a paleontologist, with qualifications that meet the satisfaction of the City of Santa Clarita, examines the site, identifies the significance of the find, and recommends a course of action. If such a scenario arises, construction shall be halted and not resumed until recommended by the site paleontologist and approved by the City of Santa Clarita.

V d. Less Than Significant Impact

No human remains are known to be located on the project site. The project site is not part of a formal cemetery and there is no reason to suspect that the site was used in the past for burial of historic or prehistoric human remains. Therefore, it is not expected that human remains would be encountered during construction or excavation activities. Regardless, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that all project grading and construction efforts be halted if a burial site is encountered. Construction and grading activities shall not resume until the County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to the origin and disposition of the human remains pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. Compliance with these regulations would ensure that the proposed project would not result in significant impacts due to disturbing human remains.

VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

VI a.

Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation

The site encompasses a portion of the eastern-most and the lower slopes of a network of low ridgelines and shallow valleys of the San Gabriel Mountains. Elevations on site range from about 1,428' on the southern-most part of the property to 1,374' in the creek bed at the northern end of the property where the channel enters the culvert under Newhall Avenue. Surface disturbance on the property has greatly altered the vegetation on the flatter areas of the site creating primarily non-native grassland. The site was graded in the past and according to the geotechnical report, between three and seven feet of fill rests upon the original topography. Riparian habitat exists along the bottom of the stream channel that flows through the project site. As with the rest of the site, the stream area does not exist in its natural state and has been disturbed by grading and channelization through the years. The stream bank is forested and contains lush vegetation. The stream sits approximately ten feet lower than the flatter areas of the site.

The San Gabriel Mountains are comprised of plutonic and metamorphic rocks that are slowly being thrust over the San Fernando Valley to the south. The Santa Clarita Valley is an east-trending trough within the Traverse Ranges Geomorphic Province. The Traverse Ranges Province is composed of parallel, east/west-trending mountain ranges and intervening sediment filled valleys.

The Traverse Ranges Province is one of the most active tectonic/seismic areas of the United States. The distinctive geologic structure of the Traverse Ranges is dominated by the effects of north-south compressive deformation that results in thrust faulting, strike-slip faulting, and bedrock folding. These active geologic features are attributable to convergence between the "Big Bend" of the San Andreas Fault and northwestern motion of the Pacific Plate, and have caused thrust fault related earthquakes such as the 1971 San Fernando, the 1987 Whittier Narrows, and the 1994 Northridge earthquakes.

The San Fernando-Sierra Madre fault zone is a recently active portion of the larger fault system that stretches from Ventura to San Bernardino along the south side of a series of large mountain ranges. Other major east-west trending faults associated with the Traverse Ranges of Southern California include the Malibu--Santa Monica--Hollywood, Santa Susana, Oak Ridge, and the Raymond fault systems. A short segment of the potentially active San Gabriel fault has recently been shown to offset Holocene alluvial materials and therefore has been designated as being active by the State Geologist. The San Fernando--Sierra Madre--Cucamonga fault system is associated with the most devastating temblors in the Los Angeles area in historic times, specifically the 1971 San Fernando earthquake and the 1994 Northridge earthquake.

Within the City of Santa Clarita the San Andreas Fault is of major concern as it makes development in the City subject to more stringent building codes. With incorporation of proper building codes the proposed project would not expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects related to seismic activity. Mitigation Measure GEO-1 encompasses the recommendations in the project's geotechnical report that references construction and building methods that are appropriate for the project site. Based on the analysis of the geotechnical report, if all recommendations are followed and implemented properly, potential impacts would be addressed and reduced to a level that would be less than significant.

(i) Less Than Significant Impact

The project site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or within any other fault zones identified on Exhibit S-2 of the City of Santa Clarita's General Plan.

(ii) Less Than Significant Impact

As stated in Section VI(a), the project site is located in one of the most seismically active regions of the United States. The proposed retail center would likely be subject to strong seismic shaking at some point in time. Consequently, precautions will be taken during the design, engineering, and construction phases of the project to ensure that the structures would perform well during seismic events in an effort to minimize earthquake damage. The proposed development will be required to be built according to the Uniform Building Code and other applicable codes, and is subject to building inspection during and after construction. Structures for human occupation must be designed to meet or exceed California Uniform Building Code standards. A geotechnical report was prepared for the project and lists specific construction methods and precautions that can be taken to reduce impacts and risk due to seismic shaking. Mitigation Measure GEO-1 encompasses the recommendations in the project's geotechnical report that references construction and building methods that are appropriate for the project site. Based on the analysis of the geotechnical report, if all recommendations are followed and implemented properly, potential impacts would be addressed and reduced to a level that would be less than significant. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose people or structures to potential adverse effects due to strong seismic ground shaking. Any impact would be less than significant.

(iii) Less Than Significant Impact

The project site is located within a known liquefaction area as shown on Exhibit S-3 of the Santa Clarita General Plan. A geotechnical report was prepared by Brian A. Robinson Associates, Inc., in August 2006 to determine specific geotechnical and soil details of the project site. Based on that report, and more specifically on a liquefaction analysis, the engineer concluded the site was suitable for development. Provided that the engineer's recommendations are incorporated into building designs, and provided that the recommendations are properly implemented during grading and construction, the site would not be subjected to seismically induced liquefaction.

(iv) Less Than Significant Impact

Based on Exhibit S-3 in the Safety Element of the City of Santa Clarita General Plan, the project site is not located in an area that is subject to soil instability nor is the site located within a fault zone. Therefore, the proposed development will not be subject to geologic hazard from landslides, settlement, or slippage and any impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure GEO-1

The applicant shall follow all grading, construction, building, and engineering recommendations and methods listed in the geotechnical report prepared by Brian A. Robinson & Associates, Inc., dated August 25, 2006. The project shall also be developed in accordance with the latest State and City building codes. Any deviation from methods listed in the geotechnical report shall require written approval from the City's Planning, Engineering, and Building and Safety

Divisions, as well as the approval of the soils engineer, project geologist, and any other City division or public agency that has jurisdiction.

VI b. Less Than Significant Impact

At some point in the past, the project site was graded and filled to create a level parcel. The site drains via sheet flow into a small gully that conveys water to the northwest under Newhall Avenue and eventually into the Santa Clara River. The property is regularly mowed and grubbed for weed abatement and fire prevention. During construction, standard Best Management Practices will be incorporated to minimize wind and soil erosion. Once project construction is complete, there will be little to no potential for soil erosion due to project landscaping and paving. Provided that the all of the recommendations are followed properly in the geotechnical report, any soil erosion would either be non-existent or less than significant.

VI c. Less Than Significant Impact

The project site has a south-to-north trending slope and is mostly flat with the exception of a gully and stream that runs across the property in a northwesterly direction. The project site is not situated on a cliff, mountainside, bluff, or other geographic feature with known stability concerns. Furthermore, the proposed project would include additional grading, slope stabilization measures, and retaining walls that would eliminate any potential unstable conditions. The geotechnical report contains recommendations, that if properly followed and implemented, would further reduce the likelihood of landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse. Therefore, any impacts to unstable soil conditions would be less than significant.

VI d. No Impact.

According to the geotechnical report prepared for the project, the soils on the project site are not expansive (page 16). Therefore, there would be no impact.

VI e. No Impact.

The project would not use a septic system. Sewer service is available in the area. Wastewater would be conveyed to treatment facilities owned by the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts. Therefore there would be no impact.

VI f. Less Than Significant Impact

The proposed project site does not contain major ridgelines or other regionally significant or notable topographic features. Therefore, there would be no impact.

VI g. Less Than Significant Impact

The proposed grading consists of 7,000 cubic yards of cut, 46,000 cubic yards of import, for a total 53,000 cubic yards of fill. The maximum fill depth would be 21'. The topography of the project site is generally flat, sloping from the south along Sierra Highway northward toward Newhall Avenue. There is an approximate grade difference of 54' from the highest point off Sierra Highway (1,428' above mean sea level) to the lowest point where the Newhall Creek runs under Newhall Avenue (1,374'). The streambed is located at the bottom of a 10' gully that runs in a northwesterly direction across the site. The import of soil and the cut and fill activities to prepare the project site for development will result in the following finished pad grades:

Hotel:	1,415'
Office Pads:	1,398'
Restaurant Pad:	1,401'

Retail 1:

1,401'

Grading will include a subterranean parking deck below the office pads. Approximately 300' of the northern end of the streambed will be channelized into a box culvert and covered with 10' of fill to create the northern parking area and building pad for Retail 1. Retail 1 will actually be located over the box culvert.

All earthwork will be engineered and graded to City standards. Finished fills, cuts, and grades will comply with the Unified Development Code. The geotechnical report lists specific construction methods and recommendations for the project that, if followed and implemented properly, would not result in significant impacts to topography, ground surface relief features, or grading and dirt hauling. Therefore, and development impacts would be less than significant.

VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

VII a. Less Than Significant Impact

The proposed project involves the development of a 10.28 acre site with five buildings including a hotel, a restaurant, a multi-tenant retail building that would include a drive-through service window, and two office/commercial buildings. This project does not involve the use or storage of hazardous substances other than the small amounts of pesticides, fertilizers, and cleaning agents required for normal maintenance of the structures and landscaping. The project must adhere to applicable zoning and fire regulations regarding the use and storage of any hazardous substances. The site is currently vacant has been used in the past for residential and stockpiling uses. Common uses in the type of development proposed for the site do not typically generate or produce hazardous materials. Since no hazardous materials are produced, no need exists to transport those materials elsewhere. Therefore, the project would not cause a significant impact related to creating significant hazards to the public or environment through the routine transport or disposal of hazardous materials.

VII b. No Impact.

Typical uses in a project such as the proposed retail center would not be expected to create a significant hazard to the public due to reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving explosion or the release of hazardous materials into the environment (including, but not limited to, oil, pesticides, chemicals, fuels, or radiation).

VII c. No Impact

McGrath Elementary School is located one mile north of the development site and would be the nearest school to the proposed retail center. This exceeds the quarter-mile (1,350') threshold identified under CEQA. As was discussed in Section VII (a) of this report, the proposed retail development is not anticipated to store, use, or generate substantial amounts of hazardous materials and is not anticipated to utilize any acutely hazardous materials. Therefore, the project would not have any related impacts.

VII d. No Impact

The proposed project is not located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites pursuant to Government Code Section 35962.5. As a result, the project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.

VII e. No Impact

The proposed development is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. The project would not create a safety hazard for people residing or working in the proposed retail center. Therefore, there would be no impact.

VII f. No Impact

The project is not within the vicinity of a private airstrip. The project would not result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the proposed development. Therefore, there would be no impact.

VII g. No Impact

The proposed development is located on vacant commercial land and fronts two major arterials. The Antelope Valley Freeway (SR-14) is also located nearby. The project would not place any permanent or temporary physical barriers on any existing public streets. The subject property is not utilized by any emergency response agencies and no emergency response facilities exist in the vicinity. Therefore, the project will not affect any adopted emergency response plan, emergency evacuation plan, or have any other impact to emergency response planning.

VII h. Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation

As shown on the City's Fire Hazards Zone map (Exhibit S-5 in the City of Santa Clarita General Plan), the project site is located within a fire hazard area. The Los Angeles County Fire Department describes the subject property as being located within the "Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone." This was formerly known as "Fire Zone 4."

The Los Angeles County Fire Department has reviewed the site plan for the proposed development and has provided conditions of approval. These conditions generally include requirements concerning access, water delivery systems, a fuel modification plan, and various other requirements that reduce the risk of fire damage to life and property. Mitigation Measure HAZ VII-1 requires the Fire Department's conditions to be incorporated into the proposed development. With the incorporation of Mitigation Measure HAZ VII-1, the proposed project's wildfire-related impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure HAZ VII-1

The County of Los Angeles Fire Department's "Conditions of Approval" for the project as stated in the Development Review Comments shall be incorporated into the Conditions of Approval that are subject to a public hearing and approval by the City of Santa Clarita Planning Commission.

VII i. No Impact

There are no known sources of potential health hazards located on site. Therefore, the proposed development would have no impact.

VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Hydrology Report, Santa Clarita Gateway, 233000 Newhall Avenue, Santa Clarita, CA 91321. Prepared for SFXS Partners, LLC. By Pickserv., Inc. August 8, 2008.

VIII a. Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation

Section 303 of the federal Clean Water Act requires states to develop water quality standards to protect the beneficial uses of receiving waters. In accordance with California's Porter/Cologne Act, the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) are required to develop water quality objectives that ensure their region meets the requirements of Section 303 of the Clean Water Act.

Santa Clarita is within the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles RWQCB. The Los Angeles RWQCB adopted water quality objectives in its Stormwater Quality Management Plan (SQMP). This SQMP is designed to ensure stormwater achieves compliance with receiving water limitations. Thus, stormwater generated by a development that complies with the SQMP does not exceed the limitations of receiving waters, and thus does not exceed water quality standards.

Compliance with the SQMP is ensured by Section 402 of the Clean Water Act, which is known as the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). Under this section, municipalities are required to obtain permits for the water pollution generated by stormwater in their jurisdiction. These permits are known as Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) permits. Los Angeles County and 85 incorporated Cities therein, including the City of Santa Clarita, obtained an MS4 (Permit # 01-182) from the Los Angeles RWQCB, most recently in 2001. Under this MS4, each permitted municipality is required to implement the SQMP.

In accordance with the County-wide MS4 permit, all new developments must comply with the SQMP. In addition, as required by the MS4 permit, the City of Santa Clarita has adopted a Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) ordinance to ensure new developments comply with SQMP. The City's SUSMP ordinance requires new developments to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) that reduce water quality impacts, including erosion and siltation, to the maximum extent practicable. This ordinance also requires most new developments to submit a plan to the City that demonstrates how the project will comply with the City's SUSMP and identifies the project-specific BMPs that will be implemented.

This project is a development planning priority project under the City's NPDES Municipal Stormwater Permit as it consists of a commercial development of greater than one acre in size. An Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (USMP) that incorporates appropriate post construction Best Management Practices (BMPs), maximizes pervious surfaces, and includes filtration into the design of the project is required to reduce potential stormwater pollution impacts to less than significant. Mitigation Measures HYD-1 and HYD-2 specifies compliance with this regulatory requirement which is a standard condition of approval.

(See also the discussion under VIII f).

Mitigation Measure HYD-1:

An Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (USMP) that incorporates appropriate post construction Best Management Practices (BMPs), maximizes pervious surfaces, and includes filtration into the design of the project must be prepared and reviewed and approved by the City of Santa Clarita Environmental Services Division for consistency with NPDES requirements prior to issuance of any grading or building permits. BMPs to meet SUSMP requirements included in the USMP shall include: 1) mitigation of potential downstream erosion

(retention of the increased flow due to the proposed project); and, 2) a series of VMPs to treat the first flush of stormwater (treatment train).

Mitigation Measure HYD-2:

Prior to site plan approval the project applicant shall submit a final grading and drainage plan for reviewed and approval by the City Engineer. The plan shall specify measures to ensure on-site retention of all eroded sediments and other pollutants and to ensure sediments and pollutants are not transported from the site via sheetflow, swales, area drains, natural drainage courses, or wind.

VIII b. Less Than Significant Impact

The project would not install any groundwater wells, and would not otherwise directly withdraw any groundwater. In addition, there are no known aquifer conditions at the project site or in the surrounding area which could be intercepted by excavation or development of the project. Therefore, the proposed project would not physically interfere with any groundwater supplies.

There are two primary watersheds that drain onto the project site: the Sierra Highway watershed and the Elsmere Canyon watershed. The water flows of these watersheds eventually empty into the Santa Clara River. The Santa Clara River is the primary groundwater recharge area for the Santa Clarita Valley (City of Santa Clarita General Plan, 1991). The proposed project would alter on-site water flows with the installation of pipes, grading of the site, the addition of a flood wall, the extension of a box culvert within Newhall Creek, and the addition of impermeable surfaces. However, the drainage of the two watersheds would remain essentially the same. The proposed drainage alterations would increase the site's outflow capacity (see VIIIId) but would not increase the flow from the site itself. Water would continue to flow into Newhall Creek and downstream into the Santa Clara River. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies.

VIII c. Less Than Significant Impact

Development projects that increase the volume or velocity of surface water can result in an increase in erosion and siltation. Increased surface water volume and velocity causes an increase in siltation and sedimentation by increasing both soil/water interaction time and the sediment load potential of water.

As required by the City of Santa Clarita and the Countywide MS4 Permit, the final design of the development's drainage systems will be engineered so that post-development peak runoff discharge rates (a measure of the volume and velocity of water flows) are equal to or less than pre-development peak runoff rates. Due to the drainage features included in the proposed site plans, standard engineering practices are expected to achieve this requirement. Consequently, the project would not substantially increase erosion or siltation off-site.

The project would result in the minor alteration of a natural drainage course with the installation of a 300 foot extension of the box culvert in Newhall Creek which would connect into the existing drainage system. Additionally, the on-site drainage systems, in accordance with the NPDES requirements discussed above in Section VIII(a), are required to include BMPs to reduce erosion and siltation to the maximum extent practicable.

Therefore, with the application of standard engineering practices, NPDES requirements, measures specified in VIIIa and City standards, the project would not result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or offsite, and the project would have no additional significant impacts.

VIII d, e. Less Than Significant Impact

Source: Hydrology Report, Santa Clarita Gateway, 233000 Newhall Avenue, Santa Clarita, CA 91321. Prepared for SFXS Partners, LLC. By Pickserv., Inc. August 8, 2008.

The 10.28-acre project site is located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Newhall Avenue and Sierra Highway. As detailed in the Hydrology Report for the project, there are two primary watersheds that flow through the project site. Approximately 580 acres of the Sierra Highway watershed drain onto the project site and approximately 1,400 acres from the Elsmere Canyon watershed drain onto the project site. The storm water runoff generated from the Sierra Highway watershed and the stormwater runoff generated from the Elsmere Canyon watershed include approximately 1,340 acres that drain under Sierra Highway north of Newhall Avenue to a confluence with the Whitney Canyon watershed below the project site.

Storm Water - Sierra Highway Watershed

The storm water runoff from the Sierra Highway watershed collects in a concrete flume that flows north, parallel to Sierra Highway and then enters into a 6 feet high by 8 feet wide reinforced concrete box culvert on the west side of Sierra Highway just south of the entrance to Eternal Valley Memorial Park & Mortuary. The reinforced concrete box culvert turns and flows under Sierra Highway. After crossing under Sierra Highway, the reinforced concrete box culvert turn again to form an "S" curve.

As the reinforced concrete box culvert approaches the southern property line of the proposed project site, it transitions into a circular 72" reinforced concrete pipe. The 72" reinforced concrete pipe flows to the north approximately 350 feet to a headwall outlet into a natural channel.

Storm Water - Elsmere Canyon Watershed

The storm water runoff from the Elsmere Canyon watershed flows under the Antelope Valley Freeway through a curved, 13.5 feet high concrete arch pipe. Storm water from the concrete arch pipe discharges into a 10 feet deep and 11 feet wide concrete flume. Storm water then flows into an 11 feet diameter corrugated metal pipe, through a curved concrete flume, and outlets into a natural channel.

Storm Water - Project Site

The storm water runoff from the Sierra Highway watershed discharges onto the site approximately 350 feet north of the southern property line of the proposed project site and flows through approximately 240 feet of natural channel to the confluence with the storm water runoff from Elsmere Canyon watershed.

After the confluence, the storm water continues flowing north through approximately 750 feet of natural channel to the entrance of a curved double 8 feet high by 10 feet wide reinforced concrete box culvert that flows under the intersection of Newhall Avenue and Sierra Highway.

Project Drainage Improvements - Flood Wall Construction and Extension of Culvert

A portion of the project site is within the 50 year floodplain (Q_{50bb} storm event) as shown in Figure 19. The on-site floodplain was determined by Pickserv, Inc. using the HEC-RAS engineering software model, as existing floodplain maps do not adequately address the project site. According to the HEC-RAS software, the existing storm drain under the intersection of Newhall Avenue and Sierra

Highway has the capacity to convey the Q25 storm event without overtopping the intersection of Newhall Avenue and Sierra Highway, but is not sufficient to convey the flow rate anticipated for the Q_{50bb} storm event without overtopping the intersection. Based on a steady state analysis using HEC-RAS, the Hydrology Study predicts the capacity of the existing storm drain under the intersection at approximately 3,600 cfs, resulting in approximately 1,700 cfs of flow over the intersection during a Q_{50bb} storm event. Therefore the proposed project includes the construction of a flood wall and extension of the existing culvert.

The proposed project includes installation of an 8' x 22' box culvert in Newhall Creek. The existing double reinforced concrete box culvert would be extended upstream into the property approximately 300 feet, reducing the intersection overflow to approximately 1,100 cfs. The culvert will connect to the existing culvert on Newhall Avenue. The culvert will affect 300 linear feet of the Newhall Creek and approximately 0.11-acres of "waters of the US" (300 linear feet). Avoidance and minimization measures for project impacts are included in the biological assessment, wetland delineation report, and diversion plan as discussed in Section IV-Biological Resources. Mitigation will consist of on-site creation of riparian habitat (0.34-acres), restoration/enhancement of riparian habitat (2.79-acres), and preservation of riparian habitat (3.13-acres). The applicant will provide additional mitigation in order to satisfy CDFG requirements, as part of obtaining a required Streambed Alteration Permit for the project.

In order to protect the proposed project from the floodplain, the proposed project includes construction of a wall along the west side of the existing natural channel. The Hydrology Report indicates that with construction of the floodwall, the existing storm drain under the intersection of Newhall Avenue and Sierra Highway has the capacity to convey the Q_{50bb} storm event without overtopping the intersection. The floodwall would be constructed along the edge of the California Department of Fish and Game Jurisdictional waters.

With implementation of the project features (flood wall, culvert extension), there will be adequate on and off-site capacity in the project vicinity to handle the Q_{50bb} storm event. Flood-related impacts are therefore anticipated to be less than significant.

The proposed project could increase runoff by installing impermeable surfaces. However, as discussed above in Section VIII.c, compliance with the City's SUSMP ordinance would ensure that post-development peak storm water runoff rates to not exceed pre-development peak storm water runoff rates. Therefore, the off-site drainage network that supports the project and surrounding watershed will be adequate to handle the project's post development runoff.

Similarly, as discussed above in Sections VIII.a and VIII.c, the project would generate only typical, non-point source, urban stormwater pollutants. These pollutants are covered by the County-wide MS4 permit, and the projects, through the City's SUSMP ordinance, are required to implement BMPs to reduce stormwater pollutants to the maximum extent practicable. Therefore, the proposed project would not create runoff that would exceed the capacity of the stormwater drainage system and would not provide a substantial additional source of polluted runoff.

VIII f.

Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation

The proposed development will not be a point-source generator of water pollutants. The only long-term water pollutants expected to be generated from the development are typical urban stormwater pollutants. Compliance with the City's SUSMP ordinance will ensure these stormwater pollutants would not substantially degrade water quality. (See discussion under VIIIa).

The project, however, also has the potential to generate short-term water pollutants during construction, including sediment, trash, construction materials, and equipment fluids. The Countywide MS4 permit requires construction sites to implement BMPs to reduce the potential for construction-induced water pollutant impacts. These BMPs include methods to prevent contaminated construction site stormwater from entering the drainage system and preventing construction-induced contaminants from entering the drainage system. The MS4 identifies the following minimum requirements for construction sites in Los Angeles County:

1. Sediments generated on the project site shall be retained using adequate Treatment Control or Structural BMPs;
2. Construction-related materials, wastes, spills or residues shall be retained at the project site to avoid discharge to streets, drainage facilities, receiving waters, or adjacent properties by wind or runoff;
3. Non-storm water runoff from equipment and vehicle washing and any other activity shall be contained at the project site; and
4. Erosion from slopes and channels shall be controlled by implementing an effective combination of BMPs (as approved in Regional Board Resolution No. 99-03), such as the limiting of grading scheduled during the wet season; inspecting graded areas during rain events; planting and maintenance of vegetation on slopes; and covering erosion susceptible slopes.

In addition, projects on a construction site of one acre or greater, such as the proposed project, are subject to additional stormwater pollution requirements during construction. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) maintains a statewide NPDES permit for all construction activities within California that result in one (1) or more acres of land disturbance. This permit is known as the State's General Construction Activity Storm Water Permit or the State's General NPDES Permit. Since the proposed project involves greater than one (1) acre of land disturbance, the project is required to submit to the SWRCB a Notice of Intent (NOI) to comply with the State's General Construction Activity Storm Water Permit. This NOI must include a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that outlines the BMPs that will be incorporated during construction. These BMPs will minimize construction-induced water pollutants by controlling erosion and sediment, establishing waste handling/disposal requirements, and providing non-storm water management procedures.

Complying with both the MS4's construction site requirements and the State's General Construction Permit, as well as implementing a SWPPP will ensure that construction of the proposed project would not significantly impact water quality. The following mitigation measure will ensure compliance with SWPPP requirements:

Mitigation Measure HYD-3:

The project applicant shall obtain coverage under a statewide General Construction Activities Stormwater Permit (General Permit). A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) shall be prepared and approved by the City's Environmental Services Division prior to the issuance of a grading permit and the project applicant shall demonstrate that a Notice of Intent (NOI) to comply with the State's General Construction Activity Storm Water Permit has been submitted to the SWRCB.

The proposed project includes the installation of 300 feet of box culvert within Newhall Creek, which is considered "waters of the United States." Section 404 of the Clean Water Act establishes a program to regulate the discharge of dredged and fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands. Activities in waters of the United States that are regulated under this program include fills for development, water resource projects (such as dams and levees), infrastructure development (such as highways and airports), and conversion of wetlands to uplands for farming and forestry. Applicants for federal permits (such as a 404 permit) that involve dredge or fill activities in surface waters (including wetlands) are required to obtain certification from the state verifying that the activity will comply with state water quality standards. This state certification is called 401 Certification in reference to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. In California, 401 Certification actions are the responsibility of the State and Regional Water Quality Control Boards. Compliance with 401 requirements ensures that activities within waters of the United States have less than significant water quality impacts. The following mitigation measures will ensure compliance with 401 certification requirements:

Mitigation Measure HYD-4:

The project applicant shall obtain a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the RWQCB for construction activities within waters of the United States, prior to the issuance of a grading permit for the proposed project. Site Specific Best Management Practices Applicable to Work in Jurisdictional Areas for the Sierra Crossing Project which may be specified in the Section 401 permit at the discretion of the RWQCB include:

- Construction shall be scheduled during the dry season.
- Native soil backfill shall be utilized.
- Prior to work, the boundaries of each impact area will be clearly marked with flagging to prevent encroachment from debris, incidental fallback, etc., into undisturbed portions of the area.
- Pre-construction meetings at the impact area will be held to review/clarify all permit conditions and to ensure all contractors observe the boundaries/limits of construction.
- Any removed soil will be stored outside of the jurisdictional area and protected by barriers such as sand bags, hay bails, etc. and covered if necessary for soil run-off, dust, and debris control.
- Construction material, debris and any other substances associated with work within the jurisdictional area will be located/stored outside of jurisdictional area throughout construction to avoid inadvertent spill into jurisdictional areas.
- Heavy equipment and other vehicles will be stored outside of jurisdictional area and any nearby sensitive habitat.
- Equipment used within jurisdictional waters will be inspected regularly for potential leaks.

- Maintenance activities such as refueling on equipment used to remove soils within jurisdictional areas will occur outside of jurisdictional areas.
- If pumps and generators are necessary they will be used with on drip pans.
- Temporary work areas will be protected and re-vegetated as soon as feasible to prevent erosion.
- Any potential ponding water will be dissipated as soon as possible to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes, gnats, black flies or other pests.

VIII g. i. No Impact

The proposed project does not include any housing. There are no dams or levees in the project vicinity that would expose the project site to flooding upon failure.

VIII h. Less Than Significant Impact

A portion of the project site is located within a 100-year flood hazard area as determined by Pickserv, Inc. as detailed in the Hydrology Report for the project. See discussion under VIII d. However, the proposed project includes construction of a flood wall, as well as the installation of a box culvert in order to protect the project site from flood hazards. These measures will ensure that flood hazards will have a less than significant impact on proposed project uses.

VIII j. No Impact

There are no bodies of water in the vicinity of the project sites that are capable of producing seiche or tsunami. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact from seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.

VIII k. Less Than Significant Impact

As discussed more fully in VIII a, VIII c, and VIII f, portions of the project site are located within a floodplain. In order to protect the project site from flooding a flood wall will be constructed. In addition, in order to ensure adequate stormwater conveyance capacity, a box culvert will be installed in 300 feet of Newhall Creek. The Hydrology Report for the proposed project includes a velocity comparison for the existing channel, and proposed channel velocities with the addition of the box culvert. According to the Hydrology Report the velocity at the outlet of the existing double reinforced concrete box culvert for the capital flood is 6.5 feet per second. The velocity at the same location for with the proposed project would also be 6.5 feet per second. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in an increase in velocity for the downstream property owners. Similarly velocities in the existing channel would generally be the same or less than under existing conditions. Impacts are therefore less than significant.

As discussed above in Sections VIII c and VIII d, compliance with the City's SUSMP ordinance would ensure that post-development peak storm water runoff rates to not exceed pre-development peak storm water runoff rates. Further, as discussed in section VIII f, the proposed changes to the sites drainages would not cause any significant impacts water quality impacts with compliance with Section 401 requirements. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in significant impacts from changes in the rate of flow, currents, or the course and direction of surface water and groundwater.

VIII l. Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation

As discussed under VIII f, the culvert extension will affect 300 linear feet of the Newhall Creek and approximately 0.11-acres of "waters of the US" (300 linear feet). Water quality mitigations are included under VIII a, VIII c, and VIII f, above. In addition, avoidance and minimization measures for project impacts

are included in the biological assessment, wetland delineation report, and diversion plan as discussed in Section IV-Biological Resources. Mitigation will consist of on-site creation of riparian habitat (0.34-acres), restoration/enhancement of riparian habitat (2.79-acres), and preservation of riparian habitat (3.13-acres). As discussed under Section IV-Biological Resources, the applicant will provide mitigation in order to satisfy CDFG requirements, as part of obtaining a required Streambed Alteration Permit for the project. With compliance with these regulatory permit/mitigation requirements impacts will be less than significant.

VIII m. Less Than Significant Impact

(i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (v), and (vi): Less Than Significant Impact

As discussed above in Sections VIIIa, VIIIc, VIId, and VIIf and VIIIf of this Mitigated Negative Declaration, the project is required to comply with the City's SUSMP ordinance, the Countywide MS4 permit, the State's NPDES General Construction Permit, and required to implement a SUSMP compliance plan and a SWPPP. Compiling with these requirements of the Clean Water Act and the NPDES will ensure the proposed projects would not significantly impact stormwater management. In addition, the project will require Section 401 and Streambed Alteration Permits which will ensure that work within Newhall Channel will not result in water quality or biological resource impacts. No additional hydrology and water quality impacts beyond those discussed above, (see Sections VIIIa, VIIIc, and VIIf), are anticipated to result from the proposed project.

(vii): Less Than Significant Impact

The project proposes commercial uses. Construction and operation of the project are required to comply with the California Waste Management Act, which requires a 50% or better diversion rate for solid waste. The City complies with this act through the City's franchised solid waste management services, which will provide waste disposal service to proposed homes.

IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING

IX a. No Impact

The project is located between the Antelope Valley Freeway and Sierra Highway. The site was graded flat sometime in the early 20th Century and once contained a residence. The site has been used recently for commercial storage and stockpiling, but overall the land is vacant. The current zoning designation is Community Commercial with a Planned Development Overlay. A vehicle storage yard is located to the south of the site, a cemetery, single-family residence, and gas station is located across the street to the west, and a fast food restaurant is situated to the north of the subject property on the other side of Newhall Avenue. The land located between the project site and the Antelope Valley Freeway is vacant and carries the same zoning and overlay designation as the subject property. The proposed project would not divide any community nor would the development, when completed, have any impacts on nearby residents. Therefore, there would be no impact.

IX b. Less Than Significant Impact

The project site is not part of a specific plan nor is the project located within the Coastal Zone as described in the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1966. The project is, however, located within the City of Santa Clarita's Redevelopment Area and the Enterprise Zone. The type of uses proposed for the site are consistent with the intent of the Redevelopment Area. Additionally, the Enterprise Zone would provide tax incentives to businesses that qualify.

Development on the site would be governed by the City of Santa Clarita General Plan and Unified Development Code. The project site is zoned Community Commercial with a Planned Development Overlay (CC(PD)). The proposed commercial development is consistent with the uses intended for the Community Commercial Zone. Because the parcel is located in an area that has been designated as a City gateway, a Planned Development (PD) Overlay was added to the underlying zoning to ensure that any development would require a hearing before the Planning Commission. The proposed project is consistent with the City's vision for the area. The applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow for additional height above 35'. A CUP is also required for any development within a PD overlay area. An Oak Tree Permit (OTP) is required for the removal of eight (8) non-heritage oak trees as well as mitigation measures to prevent impacts to other oak trees on the property. With the issuance of the CUP and OTP, the development will comply with all City codes and requirements and will be consistent with the General Plan. Therefore, the project would not conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations, and any impacts associated with project construction or operation would be less than significant.

IX c. No Impact

The project site is not within a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP), or other approved environmental resources conservation plan. Therefore, the project would not conflict with any adopted environmental conservation plans and the project would have no related impacts and no further analysis is necessary.

X. MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES

X a, b. No Impact

The project site is located within a mineral area identified on Exhibit OS-5 "Mineral Resources" of the City's General Plan. Oil wells are located in the vicinity but there is no evidence or records of past oil production on the project site itself. Furthermore, there is no reason to suspect that the site has any potential of producing oil or other mineral resources. The development would not displace nor result in the loss of any oil extraction or other mineral mining activities. Therefore, the project would have no impact.

X c. Less Than Significant

The project would utilize building materials for construction of the project, many of which are nonrenewable resources, including sand, gravel, earth, iron, steel and hardscape materials. Other construction resources such as lumber are renewable, albeit slowly. The project would consume energy and water resources as a result of the construction, operation, and maintenance of the development. Much of the energy that will be utilized on-site will be generated through combustion of fossil fuels which are not renewable resources.

Market-rate conditions encourage the efficient use of materials and employees during construction. Similarly, the energy and water resources that would be utilized by the proposed development would be acquired from regional utility purveyors that participate in various conservation programs. There are no unique conditions that would required excessive use of nonrenewable resources on the project site and the project is expected to utilize energy and water resources in the same manner as typical commercial development. Therefore, the proposed project would not use nonrenewable resources in a wasteful or inefficient manner and the project would have no related significant impacts.

XI. NOISE

XI a. Less Than Significant Impact

The proposed project would not expose persons or generate levels of noise in excess of standards established in the local General Plan or noise ordinance. Based on the City's Noise Contour Map which is listed as Exhibit N-3 under the General Plan's Noise Element, the proposed development would be located in an area that is subject to ambient noise levels around 65 dBA. Pursuant to the acceptable land uses that would be located in this type of noise environment, a retail/commercial development would be considered to be within acceptable limits. This means that retail and commercial buildings would be considered to include adequate noise insulation that is required by conventional construction methods. Furthermore, the proposed project would be consistent with the existing land uses in the immediate project vicinity which are primarily commercial in nature. The development is not in an area that would expose people to excessive noise nor would the project itself be expected to generate excessive noise. Therefore, any noise impacts would be less than significant.

XI b. Less Than Significant Impact

The project would not expose persons to, nor would it be expected to generate, excessive ground-born noise or vibration. Grading activities may temporarily generate vibrations; however, in accordance with the City's noise ordinance construction activities could only occur between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays. No construction or grading would be permitted on Sundays. There are no sensitive receptors directly adjacent to the project site. Therefore, the proposed retail/commercial development would not cause significant ground-born vibration or noise impacts.

XI c. Less Than Significant Impact

The proposed project will not increase ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels that currently exist without the project. The most noise would occur during grading and construction of the project. These activities will create a temporary increase in ambient noise levels and will subside once grading and construction is complete. With a development of this size, the increase in the number of trips to and from the site will not create a noticeable difference in ambient noise levels. Therefore, no significant long-term noise impacts are anticipated as a result of the project.

XI d. Less Than Significant Impact

Construction of the proposed project will generate short-term noise impacts. Examples of the level of noise generated by construction equipment at 50 feet from the source is presented in Table XI-1. Noise levels decrease substantially with distance. Tractors, trucks, and graders result in noise levels in the 80-86 dBA level at 50 feet. Both Sierra Highway and Newhall Avenue are more than 80' wide, providing a distance buffer between surrounding commercial parcels and the project site.

(continued on next page)

Table XI-1: Noise Levels Generated by Typical Construction Equipment

Type of Equipment	Range of Sound Levels (dBA at 50 feet)	Suggested Sound Levels for Analysis
Pile driver (12,000-18,000 ft-lb/blow)	81-96	93
Rock drill	83-99	96
Jack hammer	75-85	82
Pneumatic tools	78-88	85
Pumps	68-80	77
Bulldozer	85-90	88
Tractor	77-82	80
Concrete mixer	75-88	85
Front-end loader	86-90	88
Hydraulic backhoe	81-90	86
Hydraulic excavator	81-90	86
Grader	79-89	86
Air compressor	76-86	86
Source: EPA 1971		

Title 11, Chapter 44, Noise Regulations of the City's Municipal Code (Section 11.44.040) provides the following noise production limitations:

- A. It shall be unlawful for any person within the City to produce or cause or allow to be produced noise which is received on property occupied by another person within the designated region, in excess of the following levels, except as expressly provided otherwise herein:

Region	Time	Sound Level dB
Residential zone	Day	65
Residential zone	Night	55
Commercial manufacturing	Day	80
Commercial manufacturing	Night	70
At the boundary line between a residential property and a commercial and manufacturing property, the noise level of the quieter zone shall be used.		

(continued on next page)

- B. Corrections to Noise Limits. The numerical limits given in subsection A above shall be adjusted by the following corrections, where the following noise conditions exist:

Noise	Condition Correction (in dB)
(1) Repetitive impulsive noise	-5
(2) Steady whine, screech or hum	-5
The following corrections apply to day only:	
(3) Noise occurring more than 5 but less than 15 minutes per hour	+5
(4) Noise occurring more than 1 but less than 5 minutes per hour	+10
(5) Noise occurring less than 1 minute per hour	+20

Section 11.44.080 of the Municipal Code places limitations on construction times for purposes of limiting noise impacts and the project will subject to this limitation, therefore, no nighttime noise impacts are anticipated.

No person shall engage in any construction work which requires a building permit from the City on sites within three hundred (300) feet of a residentially zoned property except between the hours of seven a.m. to seven p.m. Monday through Friday and eight a.m. to six p.m. on Saturday. Further, no work shall be performed on the following public holidays: New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Memorial Day, and Labor Day. Project construction would be required to meet these standards. Furthermore, there are no sensitive receptors in the immediate vicinity. Therefore, the proposed project would not cause any significant impacts from temporarily generating noise.

XI e. No Impact

The proposed project is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport.

XI f. No Impact

The proposed project is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip.

XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING

XII a. Less Than Significant Impact

Growth-inducing impacts are caused by those characteristics of a project that foster or encourage population and/or economic growth. These characteristics include adding residential units or businesses, expanding infrastructure, and generating employment opportunities. Commercial development that is consistent with the General Plan and existing zoning is not considered to be substantial.

The project site currently includes 10.28 acres and is zoned Community Commercial Planned Development Overlay (CC(PD)). The proposed project is consistent with the commercial development and growth that is anticipated for the area under the General Plan. The commercial center would generate employment opportunities. The number and type of building tenants is too speculative at this point to anticipate the specific quantity of jobs that would be created, but the project would generate employment growth. Given the project

site's location near the Antelope Valley Freeway and the fact that the development would be located within the City's Enterprise Zone, the proposed development site has several advantages for businesses.

Over the next twenty years, the City's population is anticipated to increase as follows:

Area	Year	Population	Source
City of Santa Clarita	2000	151,088	US Bureau of the Census
City of Santa Clarita	2001	153,600	CA Dept. of Finance, 8/03
City of Santa Clarita	2002	158,200	CA Dept. of Finance, 8/03
City of Santa Clarita	2003	162,900	CA Dept. of Finance, 8/03
City of Santa Clarita	2008	177,520	Santa Clarita, 8/03
Santa Clarita Valley	2000	213,178	US Bureau of the Census
Santa Clarita Valley	2010	243,104	SCAG, 6/02
Santa Clarita Valley	2015	272,260	SCAG, 6/02
Santa Clarita Valley	2020	313,290	SCAG, 6/02
Santa Clarita Valley	2025	352,382	SCAG, 6/02

The project's direct minor growth inducing impacts affecting the City's population is therefore not considered to be substantial. Rather, the resulting increase in the City's employment base is regionally growth accommodating. The Southern California Association of Governments' planning efforts have assumed for this incremental increase in growth.

Since the project is growth-accommodating rather than growth-inducing, and since the project is consistent with the growth forecasts for the Southern California region, the project would not have significant growth-inducing impacts.

XII b. No Impact

The project site is undeveloped and commercially zoned, therefore, the proposed project would not displace any persons and would not have any associated impacts. No impacts will result to population and housing by the construction or operation of the project. Therefore, no additional analysis is necessary.

XII c. No Impact

The project site is undeveloped and commercially zoned. The proposed project would not displace any housing units or people and would have no associated impacts. The project will not result in either population or housing impacts. Therefore, no further analysis is necessary.

XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES

XIII a.

(i)

Less Than Significant Impact

The project is located within a "Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone" (formerly known as Fire Zone 4). As such, the project will be subject to Fuel Modification Plan approval. The project is subject to Fire Department requirements regarding the location and number of fire hydrants, fire flow, street access, turn-arounds, and signage. Compliance with Fire Department requirements are included as conditions of approval.

The proposed project will not result in the need for additional new or altered fire protection services and will not alter acceptable service ratios or response times. The proposed project would develop a retail center which would increase the structures served by the Los Angeles County Fire Department. However, the project is not large enough to require the development of additional Fire Department facilities. Therefore, the proposed project would not significantly impact fire protection services.

(ii)

Less Than Significant Impact

The proposed project will not result in the need for additional new or altered police protection services and will not alter acceptable service ratios or response times. The proposed project would result in the development of a retail center and which would increase the number of businesses served by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. However, the project itself is not large enough to require the development of additional police facilities. Therefore, the proposed project would not significantly impact police protection services.

(iii)

No Impact

The proposed project would add a retail center to the City of Santa Clarita. The site is located within the Newhall Union Elementary School District boundary, and also the William S. Hart Union High School District boundary. Although the new retail center would be located within these districts' jurisdiction, the project does not include a residential component that would increase attendance at any local school. Therefore, the project would not result in any impact to enrollment at local schools.

(iv)

Less Than Significant Impact

The proposed project would construct a retail development in the City of Santa Clarita, which may minimally increase the use of the local and regional parks system. The City's General Plan establishes Parks Standards to ensure that adequate Community and Neighborhood Parks are provided for its residents. To maintain these park standards, and in accordance with the Quimby Act, the City collects impact fees to offset the increased use of parks generated by new development. Payment of these fees mitigates the project's potential to increase the use of parks. With the payment of the City's park impact fees, if applicable, the project would not significantly impact park services.

The project would not result in any significant impacts to public services.

XIV. RECREATION

XIV a. No Impact

The proposed project consists of the development of general commercial/retail center that would be utilized primarily by surrounding communities and local population within the City. The project is not expected to increase the use of public parks. Therefore, development of the retail center would not lead to physical deterioration of existing neighborhood and regional recreational facilities and would have no related impacts.

XIV b. No Impact

The proposed project does not involve, and would not require, the construction or expansion of off-site recreational facilities. Therefore, the proposed project does not involve the development of recreational facilities that would have an adverse effect on the environment nor would the project have any other associated impacts. No significant impacts will result to recreation facilities or resources from the project and therefore no further analysis is necessary.

XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

XV a. Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation

Source: Santa Clarita Gateway Traffic Impact Analysis prepared by Austin-Foust Associates, Inc., September 2008 and also the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE).

The project is a proposed retail development consisting of approximately 99,000 square-feet of retail, office, and hotel space. The project is located at the corner of Newhall Avenue and Sierra Highway. This intersection is listed in the City's General Plan Circulation Element as a key intersection, which means that it is a vital component of the circulation network. As such, this is one of the intersections that plays a key role in the development and function of the arterial roadway system within the City. The proposed project could possibly generate changes to the circulation pattern in the local vicinity which could negatively impact the Level Of Service (LOS). Because of this, the applicant was required to prepare a traffic analysis to assess the possible impacts of the project on local traffic.

Overall, findings contained in the traffic assessment reveal that the project would decrease (worsen) the LOS at the Sierra Highway/Newhall Avenue intersection unless mitigation measures (roadway improvements) are implemented. The total number of trips generated by the project is forecasted to be 4,400; however, this includes all trips, including "pass by" trips that currently use Newhall Avenue and Sierra Highway. These trips already impact the intersection and cannot be attributed to the new development. Based on traffic forecasts, the proposed development would create 3,050 "net-new" trips that will be added to area roadways. These trips would be a direct result of the Sierra Crossing retail center.

The intersection of Newhall Avenue and Sierra Highway currently operates at LOS A in the AM peak hour and LOS B in the PM peak hour. Without the project, the short term prediction (year 2010) for this intersection is LOS B in the AM peak hour (worse than the present) and LOS B in the PM peak hour (unchanged). The Sierra Crossing retail center is forecasted to generate 3,050 new daily trips. Peak hour forecasts consist of 170 trips during the AM peak hour (105 trips inbound) and 260 trips during the PM peak hour (140 trips outbound). With the additional traffic that would be generated once the project is completed, the Sierra Highway/Newhall Avenue intersection would operate in

the short term (year 2010) at LOS B in the AM peak hour and LOS C in the PM peak hour without mitigation.

Long-term forecasts (Interim Year/2015) take into account the traffic impacts of the proposed project along with the cumulative impacts that will be generated from other approved projects in the area. Without the Sierra Crossing retail center, the Interim Year/2015 condition for the Sierra Highway/Newhall Avenue intersection is forecast to be LOS F in the AM peak hour and LOS E in the PM peak hour. With the construction of the proposed project, the AM peak LOS would remain the same at LOS F. The PM LOS, however, would worsen to LOS F unless mitigation measures are implemented.

Project mitigation measures have been identified that would offset traffic impacts at the Sierra Highway/Newhall Avenue intersection. With the proposed project, and with the incorporation of the identified mitigation measures, Interim Year/2015 conditions in the AM peak hour would actually improve from LOS F to LOS E. Afternoon peak hour conditions would remain unchanged at LOS F. To put this another way, as long as the mitigation measures are implemented, the Sierra Crossing retail center would not worsen future traffic conditions at the intersection. Mitigation Measures TR-1, TRF-2, and TRF-3 are listed below:

Mitigation Measure TRF-1

Widen northbound Sierra Highway approach along project frontage to provide a separate right-turn lane (for 2 left turn lanes, 2 through lanes, and 1 right-turn lane).

Mitigation Measure TRF-2

Modify the westbound Newhall Avenue approach by relocating the existing raised median approximately six (6) feet south, and restripe to add a second left-turn lane (for 2 left-turn lanes, 2 through lanes, and one shared through/right turn lane).

Mitigation Measure TRF-3

Modify traffic signal to provide a right-turn overlap phase for the northbound right-turn.

XV b. Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation

The project is a proposed retail development consisting of approximately 99,000 square-feet of retail, office, and hotel space. The project is located at the corner of Newhall Avenue and Sierra Highway. This intersection is listed in the City's General Plan Circulation Element as a key intersection, which means that it is a vital component in the circulation network. The project is also in the immediate vicinity of three roadways that are recognized by the Los Angeles County Congestion Management Program (CMP) as being critical mobility corridors in the Southern California region. These roadways include State Route 14 (the Antelope Valley Freeway), Sierra Highway, and Newhall Avenue. Due to potential impacts of the project on these regionally significant mobility corridors, the applicant was required to submit a traffic study to determine the impacts to these roadways.

CMP methodology states that a significant impact occurs when a proposed project increases traffic demand at a CMP monitoring location by two percent or more of capacity ($V/C \geq .02$), causing or worsening LOS F. From this trip distribution, an analysis of the affected area surrounding the project site was undertaken. The intersection of Sierra Highway and Newhall Avenue, which is a CMP monitoring location, was evaluated for peak-hour conditions since the

project is anticipated to add more than 50 peak hour trips (the threshold specified by the CMP) to this location. The peak hour volumes were derived using the trip distribution and the trip generation data contained in the traffic assessment report. The nearest CMP freeway monitoring location is SR-14 and Interstate 5. Based on the trip generation and distribution values noted in the report, the project will add less than 150 peak hour trips in either direction at this location. This is below the threshold specified by the CMP for analysis and is not considered significant.

CMP traffic analysis procedures only consider cumulative conditions reflected in the interim year (2015) analysis. The CMP analysis of the Sierra Highway/Newhall Avenue intersection revealed that in the year 2015 without the project, the intersection would operate at LOS F during both the AM and PM peak hours. If the proposed project is built, and the identified mitigation measures implemented, the intersection would improve to operate at LOS E in the AM peak hour and remain unchanged at LOS F in the PM peak hour. Moreover, Volume to Capacity (V/C) ratios would decrease by .12 in the AM peak hour and .03 in the PM peak hour.

Therefore, with the incorporation of mitigation measures, there would be no impact, either individually or cumulatively to designated CMP roadways.

XV c. No Impact

The project site is not within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. Consequently, the proposed project would not affect any airport facilities and would not cause a change in the directional patterns of aircraft. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact to air traffic patterns.

XV d. No Impact.

The project has been reviewed and evaluated by the City's Traffic Division. That division has made the determination that the circulation design does not contain any hazardous conditions. Additionally, the project's circulation design meets the City's engineering standards. Therefore, the proposed project would not increase hazards due to design features or incompatible uses, and would have no associated impacts.

XV e. Less Than Significant With Mitigation

The Los Angeles County Fire Department has reviewed the site plan for the retail development and provided conditions of approval for the project. These conditions include various access requirements, including all weather access, Fire Department access extended to within 150 feet of all structures, turnaround requirements, and clearance requirements. Mitigation Measure HAZ-1 requires the Fire Department's conditions of approval to be incorporated into the project. With the incorporation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-1, the proposed project would not result in significant impacts related to emergency access.

XV f. No Impact

As proposed, the project meets the City's parking requirement for the uses on-site. The proposed development would require 385 parking spaces; 434 spaces are provided. Buildings that will not be built initially, the hotel and stand-alone restaurant pad for example, will require separate development review. During the development review process those buildings will be reviewed and compared against available parking to ensure that parking requirements are met. Parking spaces will be accommodated in surface parking lots as well as a subterranean parking deck located in the middle portion of the site. Given that all City

requirements for parking have been satisfied, the proposed project would not create any parking impacts.

XV g. No Impact

The proposed project does not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs that support alternative transportation.

XV h. No Impact

The proposed project involves the development of a commercial/retail center. The construction and operation of the proposed project would not place any permanent or temporary physical barriers on any existing public street. Furthermore, all development for the proposed project would occur on-site and, thus, the proposed project would not impose any physical barriers on any existing pedestrian, bicycle, or vehicle travel route. Therefore, the proposed project would not create hazards or barriers to pedestrians or bicyclists.

XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

XVI a. No Impact

The project proposes the construction of two 1-story retail/restaurant buildings, two 2-story retail/office buildings, and a 4-story hotel building. None of the proposed uses for the project would generate atypical wastewater such as industrial or agricultural waste matter. The wastewater generated by the proposed development is expected to be domestic sewage. The local wastewater treatment facilities are designed to treat domestic sewage. Since the proposed development would not generate atypical wastewater, and since local facilities exist to treat the effluent that would be created by the development, the proposed project would not exceed wastewater treatment requirements and would not have any associated impacts.

XVI b. No Impact

Water planning is addressed through the Urban Water Management Plan. The Plan indicates that there is sufficient water to meet projected residential and commercial demand. The Plan also identifies conservation measures that can be implemented in the future during drought years. The proposed project would be subject to any future water conservation requirements of the Urban Water Management Plan. The only water improvements required for the project are on-site connections to the infrastructure system, which are subject to connection fees. Therefore, the proposed project would neither require nor result in the construction or expansion of new water or wastewater treatment facilities offsite, and the project would have no associated impacts.

XVI c. Less Than Significant Impact

As discussed in Section VII, the project will not significantly impact the stormwater drainage system. No offsite stormwater improvements are proposed or required. The final design of the development's drainage system will be engineered so that post-development peak runoff discharge rates are equal to or less than pre-development run-off rates.

XVI d. Less Than Significant Impact

The proposed project is consistent with the City's General Plan and zoning ordinance. The Newhall County Water District (NCWD) will provide water services to the project area. The NCWD's water resources are derived primarily from the State Water Project, local groundwater, and the Castaic Lake Water Agency. Contract entitlements from the State vary from year to year. Currently, the NCWD has the ability to provide water to the project without impacting its

ability to provide water to its other customers. As proposed, the project will not have any significant impacts on the water supply.

XVI e. Less Than Significant Impact

Wastewater services to the proposed project are provided by the County Sanitation District of Los Angeles County (Sanitation District). The existing facilities for the Sanitation District are sufficient to accommodate the proposed development. Therefore, the proposed project would result in determination by the wastewater treatment provider that it has adequate capacity to serve the project. Any impact to wastewater resources would be less than significant.

XVI f. Less Than Significant Impact

The proposed project would be served by the Chiquita Canyon Landfill. Chiquita Canyon has sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs. The Chiquita Canyon Landfill is expected to be permitted through 2019.

XVI g. No Impact.

The project would comply with all solid waste statutes and regulations. Los Angeles County has developed a Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan (CIWMP) in order to meet the County's long-term solid waste disposal needs. California's Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan (ISWMP) requires each County to adopt a Non-Disposal Facility Element (NDFE), also known as a Countywide Siting Element (CSE), and a Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE). The NDFE is a 15-year planning document that addresses the solid waste disposal needs of the cities and the incorporated communities for that portion of the solid waste stream that remains after all recycling, composting, and other waste diversion activities are completed. The SRRE describes each County's program to meet the 50% solid waste diversion goals of AB 939. The SRRE includes the following components: waste characterization, source reduction, recycling, composting, solid waste facility capacity, education and public information, funding, special waste (asbestos, sewage sludge, etc.), and household hazardous waste. Pursuant to the CIWMP, the County is developing infrastructure, conversion technologies, and recycling programs aimed at diverting 70 percent of Los Angeles County's solid waste stream by 2020. The proposed project is required to comply with all state, county, and City solid waste diversion regulations. Therefore, the project would not cause any significant impacts from conflicting with statutes or regulations related to solid waste.

XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

XVII a. Less Than Significant Impact

As discussed in Section IV of this document, the proposed project would not have substantial impacts to special status species, stream habitat, and wildlife dispersal and migration. Furthermore, the proposed project would not affect the local, regional, or national populations or ranges of any plant or animal species and would not threaten any plant communities. Similarly, as discussed in Section V of this document, the proposed project would not have substantial impacts to historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources, and thus, would not eliminate any important examples of California history or prehistory. Therefore, the proposed project does not have a Mandatory Finding of Significance due to impacts to biological or cultural resources.

XVII b. Less Than Significant Impact

The proposed project would not cause impacts that are cumulatively considerable. The project has the potential to contribute to cumulative air

quality, biological resources, hydrology, noise, and traffic impacts. However, the project's contribution to these cumulative impacts would not be considerable. Therefore, the proposed project does not have a Mandatory Finding of Significance due to cumulative impacts.

XVII c. Less Than Significant Impact

As discussed in Section VIII and XV of this document, the proposed project would not expose persons to flooding or transportation hazards. Section VI of this document explains that occupants of the proposed project could be exposed to strong seismic earth shaking due to the potential for earthquakes in Southern California; however, modern engineering practices would ensure that the geologic and seismic conditions of the proposed project would not cause substantial adverse effects on humans. Section VII of this document examines the projects for potential impacts from hazards and hazardous material. As explained in Section VII, there are no significant hazardous conditions on the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a Mandatory Finding of Significance from environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on humans.

MITIGATION MONITORING PLAN**Identification of Mitigation Measures and Monitoring Activities****I. AESTHETICS**

None required

II. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

None required

III. AIR QUALITY**Mitigation Measure AQ-1:**

During grading and construction, fugitive dust emissions shall not exceed the performance standards in SCAQMD Rule 403.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The monitor shall conduct periodic site inspections during construction to ensure compliance with this measure.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division

Mitigation Measure AQ-2:

During grading and construction, active areas and haul roads shall be watered at least twice (two times) per day.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The monitor shall conduct periodic site inspections during construction to ensure compliance with this measure.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division

Mitigation Measure AQ-3:

During construction, replace ground cover in disturbed areas as quickly as possible. Disturbed surfaces shall be maintained in a stabilized condition using water or other chemical dust suppressant until ground cover is replaced.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The monitor shall conduct periodic site inspections during construction to ensure compliance with this measure.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division

Mitigation Measure AQ-4:

Off-road vehicles on-site shall not travel at speeds greater than 15 miles per hour.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The monitor shall conduct periodic site inspections during construction to ensure compliance with this measure.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division

Mitigation Measure AQ-5:

To the satisfaction of the City of Santa Clarita, the project shall have greater energy efficiency than Title 24 standards.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The monitor shall conduct periodic site inspections during construction to ensure compliance with this measure.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division and Building and Safety Division

Mitigation Measure AQ-6:

To the satisfaction of the City of Santa Clarita, the project shall comply with the following "GHG Reduction" policies of the City's Draft General Plan:

Policy:

Promote construction of **energy efficient buildings** through requirements for LEED certification or through comparable alternative requirements as adopted by local ordinance.

Policy:

Encourage on-site solar generation of electricity in **new retail and office** commercial buildings and associated parking lots, carports, and garages, in concert with significant energy conservation efforts.

Policy:

Encourage new development to use **passive solar heating** and cooling techniques in building design and construction, which may include but are not be limited to building orientation, clerestory windows, skylights, placement and type of windows, overhangs to shade doors and windows, and use of light colored roofs and paving materials.

Policy:

Encourage the use of trees and landscaping to reduce heating and cooling energy loads, through **shading** of buildings and parking lots.

Policy:

Encourage **energy-conserving** heating and cooling systems and appliances, and energy-efficiency in windows and insulation, in all new construction.

Policy:

Limit **excessive lighting levels**, and encourage a reduction of lighting when businesses are closed to a level required for security.

Policy:

Provide **incentives and technical assistance** for installation of energy-efficient improvements in existing and new buildings.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The monitor shall conduct periodic site inspections during construction to ensure compliance with this measure.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division and Building and Safety Division

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Mitigation Measure BIO-1:

No greater than 30 days prior to construction, the project site shall be surveyed for special-status plants by a qualified botanist. While the survey shall be conducted for all special-status plants, the botanist shall specifically determine if Davidson's bush mallow or Greata's aster are present on-site. If any special-status plant species are encountered, avoidance, transplant, or replacement measures shall be undertaken in accordance with the Guidelines for Conducting and Reporting Botanical Inventories for federally Listed, Proposed and Candidate Plants from USFWS's Recovery Plan for Six Plants from the Mountains Surrounding the Los Angeles Basin (USFWS 1999). If any of such plants are eliminated or transplanted, the California Department of Fish and Game shall be notified. If any of these plants are to be transplanted, they shall be planted in a suitable location under the supervision of a qualified biologist. Temporary irrigation shall be provided to transplanted plants until such time that they are able to survive on their own.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The applicant shall notify the City project manager and shall provide survey and constructions timelines. Construction shall not commence until the City has been notified and grants its approval.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division

Mitigation Measure BIO-2:

A qualified biological monitor with all required collection permits shall be on-site during the vegetation removal and grading operations and shall survey for species prior to these activities. If any life stages of any native vertebrate species are found in the path of construction, the monitor shall relocate the species to a pre-determined, safe location. Exclusionary devices shall be erected to prevent the migration into or the return of the species into the work site.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The monitor shall conduct periodic site inspections during construction to ensure compliance with this measure.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division

Mitigation Measure BIO-3:

The Applicant shall have a qualified wildlife biologist survey the area to confirm the presence/absence of silvery legless lizard, black-tailed jackrabbit, woodrat, and/or other species of concern likely to be found in the area during construction. If evidence exists that additional surveys are required, survey techniques, timing, and schedule shall be subject to the review and approval of the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). Survey results, analysis, and recommendations, along with the filed notes shall be provided to the CDFG prior to commencing construction or within two weeks of completion of field surveys, whichever is earlier. Should any sensitive species be found during pre-project surveys and work must be done in identified areas during sensitive periods, the applicant shall develop and implement a plan for the protection of these species. This plan shall be approved by the CDFG prior to commencing work. The results of any surveys and any protective measures instituted, as part of the protection and monitoring plan, shall be provided to the CDFG within one week from implementation. The applicant shall be responsible for reporting all observations of threatened/endangered species or of species of special concern to the CNDDB within ten days of sighting.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The monitor shall conduct periodic site inspections during construction to ensure compliance with this measure.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division

Mitigation Measure BIO-4:

The applicant shall not allow any activity near the nesting sites of the woodrat during the recognized nesting, rearing, and dispersal season, which is November through April. The applicant shall develop a relocation plan to ensure the protection of this species. This plan shall include the trapping of individuals and the relocation of the nests to a suitable open space area outside of the project footprint. Trapping shall occur for a minimum of three nights and any captured woodrats or other small mammals shall be released outside of the project's footprint (e.g., in the Willow Riparian Forest preserve area). The method of breaking up the nest shall be in a manner that allows any individual in the nest to escape without being harmed (e.g., dismantled by hand). This shall be done during the late afternoon hours. These activities shall be done outside of the woodrat breeding/rearing season to avoid impacts to this species.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: If woodrat nests are found on site, the applicant shall notify the City of the date and time that the nests are will be dismantled so that the monitor can be present when the nests are broken up.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division

Mitigation Measure BIO-5:

Immediately prior to construction (within 1 day prior to construction), the project site shall be raked for silvery legless lizard by a qualified biologist. Any discovered silvery legless lizards shall be released into the Willow Riparian Forest preserve area. Exclusionary devices shall be erected to prevent the migration into or the return of the species into the work site.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The applicant shall contact the City and inform the City project manager of the date and time that raking will be conducted.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division

Mitigation Measure BIO-6:

Prior to the issuance of a grading permit and no greater than one year from the start of construction, updated protocol surveys for the least Bell's vireo and the southwestern willow flycatcher shall be conducted by a permitted biologist in accordance with US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) guidelines. If either species is determined to be present on-site, the City of Santa Clarita shall not issue a grading permit for the project until the appropriate take permits have been issued by the FWS and/or the CDFG.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The applicant shall contact the City and inform the City project manager of the date and time that raking will be conducted.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Engineering Division

Mitigation Measure BIO-7:

The applicant shall not remove or otherwise disturb vegetation or conduct any other project activities on the project site from March 1 to September 15 to avoid impacts to breeding/nesting birds. If work during the breeding/nesting season cannot be avoided then, prior to construction or site preparation activities, the applicant shall have a qualified biologist survey all breeding/nesting habitat within the project site and adjacent to the project site for breeding/nesting birds. Surveys shall be conducted for 5 consecutive days or other methodology acceptable to CDFG. If active nests are present, the nest-site shall be protected by a 300-foot buffer (500 feet for raptors) or as determined by CDFG. No construction activities will be allowed within the buffer area until the nest becomes inactive (the young have fledged, the young are no longer being fed by the parents, the young have left the area, and the young will no longer be impacted by the project).

(Mitigation Monitoring Program continues on next page)

(Mitigation Measure BIO-7 Continued . . .)

If there are no nests present, vegetation should be removed within 3 days after completion of the survey. Documentation of findings, including a negative finding must be submitted to the CDFG for review and concurrence. If no breeding/nesting birds are observed and concurrence has been received from the CDFG, site preparation and construction activities may begin.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The monitor shall conduct periodic site inspections during construction to ensure compliance with this measure.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division

Mitigation Measure BIO-8:

The project proponent shall provide replacement Willow Riparian habitat to the satisfaction of the CDFG at a ratio of 7:1 (replacement to impacts) for the 0.183 acres of habitat previously impacted and at a ratio of 3:1 (replacement to impacts) for the 1.10 acres impacted by the proposed project.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: Prior to the issuance of a grading permit, the monitor shall verify that the applicant has complied with this mitigation measure.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division and Development Services Division

Mitigation Measure BIO-9:

A 50-foot wide buffer of native vegetation shall be provided along the mitigation area and along all riparian and wetland drainages. The buffer shall serve to minimize the amount of light, noise, and other human generated impacts on the streambed habitat. All fuel modification activities shall be conducted outside of the streambed and native vegetation buffer area.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The monitor shall conduct periodic site inspections during construction to ensure compliance with this measure.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division

Mitigation Measure BIO-10:

The limits of the project's construction footprint shall be flagged prior to any construction activities on-site. Vegetation shall not be removed or intentionally damaged beyond these limits.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The monitor shall conduct periodic site inspections during construction to ensure compliance with this measure.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division

(Mitigation Monitoring Program continues on next page)

Mitigation Measure BIO-11:

In order to avoid accidental damage or disturbance to oak trees on or near the site, prior to the issuance of grading permit all oak trees on site that are not approved for removal and all oak trees within 50 feet of the potential area of ground disturbance shall be fenced at their protected zones with a minimum 4' high fence before any site grading commences. Fencing shall remain during all phases of construction and shall not be moved or removed without City approval.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The monitor shall conduct periodic site inspections during construction to ensure compliance with this measure.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division and Oak Tree Specialist.

Mitigation Measure BIO-12:

In order to avoid accidental damage or disturbance to oak trees on or near the site during construction, no equipment storage, debris drop, or parking shall occur within the drip lines of any oak tree not approved for removal.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The monitor shall conduct periodic site inspections during construction to ensure compliance with this measure.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division and Oak Tree Specialist.

Mitigation Measure BIO-13:

Pursuant to the City of Santa Clarita's Oak Tree Ordinance (Ordinance 88-34) and to the satisfaction of the City's Oak Tree Specialist, the oak trees removed from the site shall be replaced with oak trees at a value commensurate with the fully appraised value of the trees removed. A planting plan shall be provided to the City for approval of trees with locations and sizes, and three years of maintenance shall be provided to ensure the trees survive.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The monitor shall conduct periodic site inspections during construction to ensure compliance with this measure.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division and Oak Tree Specialist.

Mitigation Measure BIO-14 Oak Tree Maintenance:

- A) Arborist of Record Agreement – The applicant shall retained an Arborist (AOR) to assist with Mitigation Measure compliance. The AOR will review the landscape plans and provide recommendations as needed.

Landscaping – Landscaping shall follow the City's minimum requirements;

1. Plantings within any oak tree protected zone must be drought tolerant only;
 2. No spray-type irrigation systems are permitted within the protected zone;
 3. A three-inch layer of organic mulch will be installed within the protected zone;
 4. Landscape plans are subject to City approval.
- B) Monitoring after construction – The applicant shall obtain the authorization of future residents or owners allowing continued access by the AOR after construction is finished.
- C) The AOR shall visit the property on a quarterly basis for two years after the completion of the project, and semi-annually for one year after that, as required by the City. The AOR shall inspect all mitigation-installed oaks on the property. At the discretion of the AOR, the frequency of the monitoring may be reduced if the oak trees appear to be flourishing and in stable condition.

(Mitigation Measure BIO-14 Oak Tree Maintenance Continued . . .)

- D) Per the City requirements, the AOR shall certify that the property is in compliance with all the conditions of the oak tree permit. Observations regarding the oaks health shall be reported to the City, including is any oaks decline or fail to survive. Oaks failing to survive during the monitoring period, including any that fail to thrive after planting will be mitigated for as determined by the City.
- E) 48-Hour Notice and Certification of Oak Tree Work-the applicant shall provide 48-hours notice to the department of Community Development before planting the mitigation oak trees or before doing any work on or near them one they are planted. (AOR requires 96-hour notice)
- F) The AOR will evaluate and report the findings to the Department of Community Development regarding the work related to or potentially affecting the planted oak trees. These reports will certify whether all work was conducted in accordance with the oak tree permit and oak tree report. Reports shall be submitted within 10-days of the AOR being informed that the work was completed.
- G) Specifically, the AOR shall review the mitigation plantings and provide a report certifying that the work follows the oak tree permit and acceptable planting standards. The AOR will also evaluate and provide a report to the City as needed on any other work that may affect the mitigation oaks, including but not limited to irrigation installation, pruning anything larger than two-inches in diameter, or installation of sidewalks and other hardscape near mitigation oaks.
- H) Oak Tree Information Package-The applicant shall provide a sample information package to the City for approval if requested. The same packet shall be provided to the property buyer via certified mail. The information included shall be as follows:
 - 1. Cover letter introducing the information packet;
 - 2. Oak trees-Care and Maintenance;
 - 3. Oak Tree Ordinance;
 - 4. Oak Tree Preservation and Protection Guideline;
 - 5. Copies of the Development and Oak Tree Permit;

The cover letter will then be forwarded to the Department of Community Development along with the signed copy of the return receipt card.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The monitor shall conduct periodic site inspections during construction to ensure compliance with this measure.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division and Oak Tree Specialist.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Mitigation Measure CUL-1:

If archeological resources are encountered during project excavation or construction, all construction activities shall immediately cease until an archeologist certified by the Society of Professional Archeologists examines the site, identifies the archaeological significance of the find, and recommends a course of action. Construction shall not resume until the site archaeologist states in writing that the proposed construction activities will not significantly damage archaeological resources, and the City of Santa Clarita concurs with this conclusion.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The monitor shall conduct periodic site inspections during construction to ensure compliance with this measure.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division

Mitigation Measure CUL-2:

If paleontological resources are encountered during project excavation or construction, all construction activities shall immediately cease until a paleontologist with qualifications that meet the satisfaction of the City of Santa Clarita, examines the site, identifies the significance of the find, and recommends a course of action. If such a scenario arises, construction shall be halted and not resumed until recommended by the site paleontologist and approved by the City of Santa Clarita.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The monitor shall conduct periodic site inspections during construction to ensure compliance with this measure.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division

VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS**Mitigation Measure GEO-1:**

The applicant shall follow all grading, construction, building, and engineering recommendations and methods listed in the geotechnical report prepared by Brian A. Robinson & Associates, Inc., dated August 25, 2006. The project shall also be developed in accordance with the latest State and City building codes. Any deviation from methods listed in the geotechnical report shall require written approval from the City's Planning, Engineering, and Building and Safety Divisions, as well as the approval of the soils engineer, project geologist, and any other City division or public agency that has jurisdiction.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: The monitor shall review building and grading plans to ensure consistency with soils report.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita, Planning, Building & Safety and Development Services Divisions

VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**Mitigation Measure HAZ-1:**

The County of Los Angeles Fire Department's "Conditions of Approval" for the project as stated in the Development Review Comments shall be incorporated into the Conditions of Approval that are subject to a public hearing and approval by the City of Santa Clarita Planning Commission.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: City Project Manager

Monitoring Action/Timing: Prior to project approval, the monitor shall ensure the County of Los Angeles Fire Department's "Conditions of Approval" for the project are incorporated into the project's conditions of approval.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Building & Safety and Development Services Divisions; and the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

(Mitigation Monitoring Program continues on next page)

VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Mitigation Measure HYD-1:

An Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (USMP) that incorporates appropriate post construction Best Management Practices (BMPs), maximizes pervious surfaces, and includes filtration into the design of the project must be prepared and reviewed and approved by the City of Santa Clarita Environmental Services Division for consistency with NPDES requirements prior to issuance of any grading or building permits. BMPs to meet SUSMP requirements included in the USMP shall include: 1) mitigation of potential downstream erosion (retention of the increase flow due to the proposed project); and, 2) a series of VMPs to treat the first flush of stormwater (treatment train).

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: Prior to the issuance of grading and building permits.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Environmental Services Division

Mitigation Measure HYD-2:

Prior to site plan approval the project applicant shall submit a final grading and drainage plan for reviewed and approval by the City Engineer. The plan shall specify measures to ensure on-site retention of all eroded sediments and other pollutants and to ensure sediments and pollutants are not transported from the site via sheetflow, swales, area drains, natural drainage courses, or wind.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: Prior to the issuance of a Building Permit, the monitor shall review the "Construction Site Plan Review Application" and corresponding DOGGR approval.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division

Mitigation Measure HYD-3:

The project applicant shall obtain coverage under a statewide General Construction Activities Stormwater Permit (General Permit). A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) shall be prepared and approved by the City's Environmental Services Division prior to the issuance of a grading permit and the project applicant shall demonstrate that a Notice of Intent (NOI) to comply with the State's General Construction Activity Storm Water Permit has been submitted to the SWRCB.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: Prior to the issuance of a grading or building permit.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Engineering Division

Mitigation Measure HYD-4:

The project applicant shall obtain a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the RWQCB for construction activities within waters of the United States, prior to the issuance of a grading permit for the proposed project. Site Specific Best Management Practices Applicable to Work in Jurisdictional Areas for the Sierra Crossing Project which may be specified in the Section 401 permit at the discretion of the RWQCB include:

- Construction shall be scheduled during the dry season.
- Native soil backfill shall be utilized.
- Prior to work, the boundaries of each impact area will be clearly marked with flagging to prevent encroachment from debris, incidental fallback, etc., into undisturbed portions of the area.
- Pre-construction meetings at the impact area will be held to review/clarify all permit conditions and to ensure all contractors observe the boundaries/limits of construction.
- Any removed soil will be stored outside of the jurisdictional area and protected by barriers such as sand bags, hay bails, etc., and covered if necessary for soil run-off, dust, and debris control.

Mitigation Measure HYD-4 Continued . . .)

- Construction material, debris and any other substances associated with work within the jurisdictional area will be located/stored outside of jurisdictional area throughout construction to avoid inadvertent spill into jurisdictional areas.
- Heavy equipment and other vehicles will be stored outside of jurisdictional area and any nearby sensitive habitat.
- Equipment used within jurisdictional waters will be inspected regularly for potential leaks.
- Maintenance activities such as refueling on equipment used to remove soils within jurisdictional areas will occur outside of jurisdictional areas.
- If pumps and generators are necessary they will be used with on drip pans.
- Temporary work areas will be protected and re-vegetated as soon as feasible to prevent erosion.
- Any potential ponding water will be dissipated as soon as possible to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes, gnats, black flies or other pests.

Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant

Monitoring Action/Timing: Prior to the issuance of a grading or building permit.

Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division

IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING

None required.

X. MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES

None required.

XI. NOISE

None required.

XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING

None required.

XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES

None required.

XIV. RECREATION

None required.

]

XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC
<p>Mitigation Measure TRF-1: Widen northbound Sierra Highway approach along project frontage to provide a separate right-turn lane (for 2 left turn lanes, 2 through lanes, and 1 right-turn lane).</p> <p>Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant Monitoring Action/Timing: Prior to the issuance of a grading or building permit. Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division</p> <p>Mitigation Measure TRF-2: Modify the westbound Newhall Avenue approach by relocating the existing raised median approximately six (6) feet south, and restripe to add a second left-turn lane (for 2 left-turn lanes, 2 through lanes, and one shared through/right turn lane).</p> <p>Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant Monitoring Action/Timing: Prior to the issuance of a grading or building permit. Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division</p>
<p>Mitigation Measure TRF-3 Modify traffic signal to provide a right-turn overlap phase for the northbound right-turn.</p> <p>Party Responsible for Mitigation: Project Applicant Monitoring Action/Timing: Prior to the issuance of a grading or building permit. Enforcing, Monitoring Agency: City of Santa Clarita Planning Division</p>
XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS
None required.
XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE
None required.